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ABSTRACT

This publication contains a brief description of secondary education in Estonia. The first section provides an overview of the societal and political context in which the educational system exists. The second section discusses current educational issues, including policy formation, finance, the school role in the community, administration and organization, curriculum, evaluation and assessment, school staff, and Estonia's relationship to the rest of Europe. Issues pertaining to educational efficiency and performance are discussed in the third section, with a focus on raising educational performance (students repeating grades in the years after being a Soviet state), student expulsions, and enrollment in institutions of higher education. Challenges, problems, and prospects are presented in the fourth section. The years 1966 to 1975 signified the transition to a compulsory general education system which contributed to a decline in educational standards and an unbalanced curriculum. Estonian educators are currently focusing on the development and implementation of the new curriculum, teacher training and financial aspects of education. Thirteen tables are included. (LMI)

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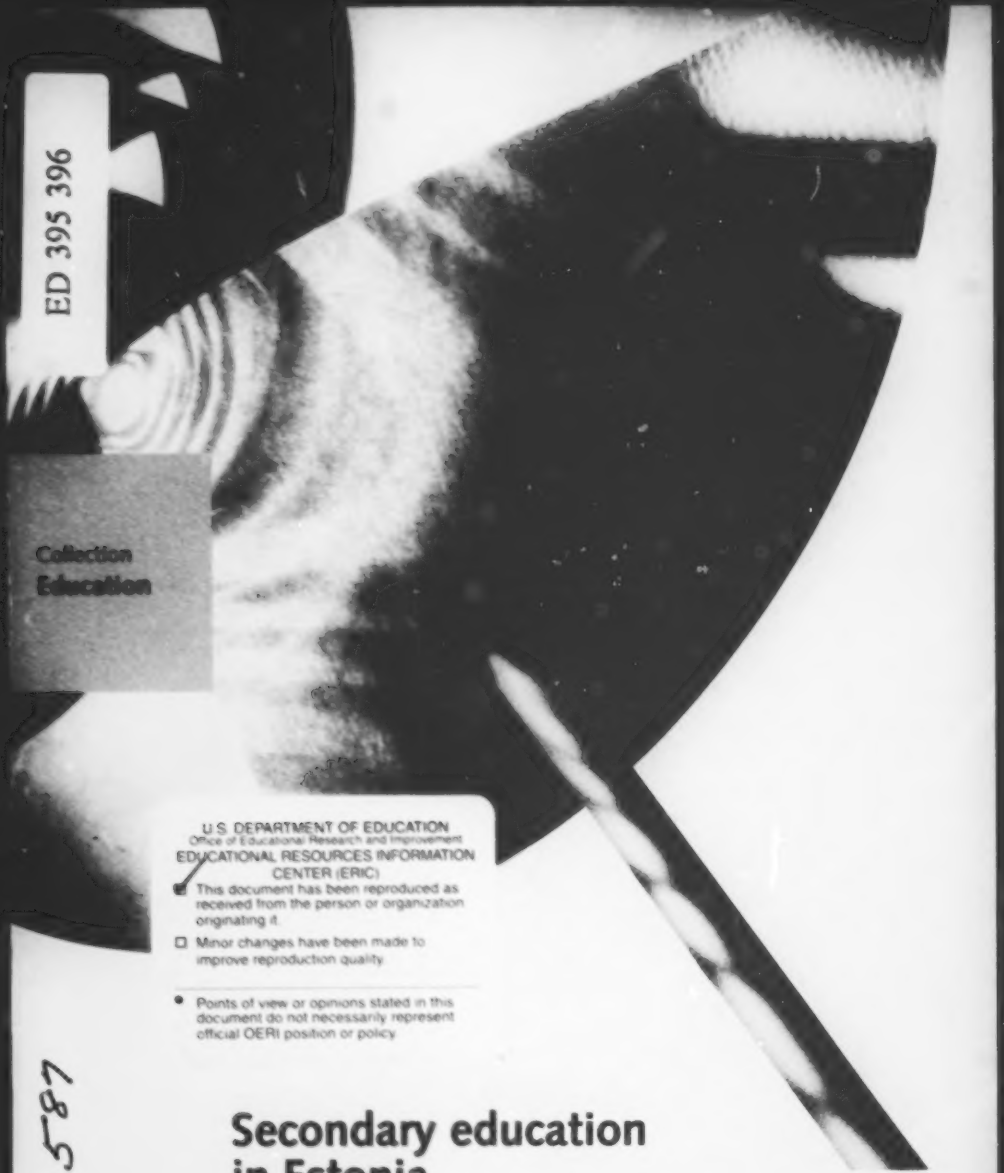

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Secondary education in Estonia

Council of Europe Press

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Secondary education in Estonia

by Tiia Raudma

Guide to secondary education in Europe
Editor Denis Kallen

A secondary education for Europe
Council for Cultural Co-operation

Council of Europe Publishing, 1996

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The **Council of Europe** was founded in 1949 to achieve greater unity between European parliamentary democracies. It is the oldest of the European political institutions and has thirty-eight member states,[1] including the fifteen members of the European Union. It is the widest intergovernmental and interparliamentary grouping in Europe, and has its headquarters in the French city of Strasbourg.

Only questions related to national defence are excluded from the Council of Europe's work, and the Organisation has activities in the following areas: democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms; media and communication; social and economic affairs; education, culture, heritage and sport; youth, health, environment and regional planning; local democracy; and legal co-operation.

The **European Cultural Convention** was opened for signature in 1954. This international treaty is open to European countries that are not members of the Council of Europe, and it enables them to take part in the Organisation's programmes on education, culture, sport and youth. So far, forty-four states have acceded to the European Cultural Convention; the Council of Europe's full member states plus Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, the Holy See, Monaco and Russia.

The **Council for Cultural Co-operation** (the CDCC) is responsible for the Council of Europe's work on education and culture. Four specialised committees – the Education Committee, the Standing Conference on University Problems, the Culture Committee and the Cultural Heritage Committee – help the CDCC to carry out its tasks under the European Cultural Convention. There is also a close working relationship between the CDCC and the regular conferences of specialised European ministers responsible for education, culture and cultural heritage.

The CDCC's programmes are an integral part of the Council of Europe's work, and, like the programmes in other sectors, they contribute to the Organisation's three overarching policy objectives for the 1990s:

– the protection, reinforcement and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and pluralist democracy;

– the promotion of an awareness of European identity;

1. Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldava, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

– the search for common responses to the great challenges facing European society.

The CDCC's education programme covers school, higher and adult education, as well as educational research. At present, there are projects on: education for democratic values; history; modern languages; school links and exchanges; the reform of secondary education; access to higher education; the reform of legislation on higher education in central and eastern Europe; academic mobility; and educational documentation and research.

In 1991, the Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe launched a project entitled "A secondary education for Europe". The aims of the project are to:

– give young people the knowledge, skills and attitudes they will need to meet the major challenges of European society;

– prepare young people for higher education, and for mobility, work and daily life in a multilingual and multicultural, democratic Europe;

– make young people aware of their common cultural heritage and their shared responsibilities as Europeans.

This project has two elements: the first devoted to reflections and consultations among the member states on the overall policies and strategies, and the second on the European dimension in the school curriculum.

The series entitled "Guide to secondary education in Europe" sets out to present in a synthetic form – country by country – the major elements of secondary education structures and policies that exist in CDCC member states.

Each guide has been written, on the basis of a common analysis, by experts designated by the authorities in each country concerned.

Denis Kallen has undertaken the difficult task of the general co-ordination of this series, guaranteeing its coherence and thus allowing comparisons to be made among countries.

Given that this is a field in which developments sometimes take place very quickly and are of an almost permanent nature, it is possible that, despite the considerable efforts made to take into account the latest reforms in the pipeline, certain changes may have taken place since the manuscript was originally received.

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I. General section

1. Secondary education

The development of education in Estonia over the last two decades has involved integrating aspects of both the Soviet educational system and the democratic educational systems of Europe.

Aims and objectives

Different eras and societies have different approaches to education. The Soviet Union, an industrial state (primarily, heavy and military industry), placed great emphasis on education – teaching professional knowledge, crafts and skills. Individuals were subordinate to collective authority in this totalitarian society. Soviet ideology supported such an attitude. The aim of education was to adapt people to their society. The right to education was listed as a fundamental constitutional right. Education was viewed as a practical social function, which the state valued and supported in many ways, including the following: schools were easily accessible and free; vocational schools gave regular grants to students; a free school lunch has been available to many students since 1969; and the transition to the use of free textbooks began in general education schools in 1977. General secondary school was a unified polytechnic school whose objective was to provide general, professional and polytechnic preparation. Training workers was of political importance. Considering the practical importance of education, having an educated population became a central objective of the Soviet state.

The 1992 Estonian Constitution establishes the responsibility of the state for all its citizens and permanent residents: Article 37 states that all persons residing in Estonia shall have the right to education. Both state and local governments should have a sufficient number of educational institutions to secure this right. Moreover, the Constitution guarantees instruction in the student's chosen language. In some Estonian schools, ethnic minorities are, upon parental request, taught in a minority language, on condition that Estonian, the official language, is an obligatory subject.

Although Estonia is now once again an independent and democratic republic after fifty years of Soviet occupation, for an effective change in society to occur the school system must also change. The educational system in Estonia is undergoing profound revision. This reform involves a transition from the rigid, highly politicised Soviet educational system to a flexible, individually-oriented system based on European standards. A democratic information-based society is being developed with education performing a social and innovative function. Education in Estonia today is designed not only to promote the integration of Estonia into Europe, but also to build and strengthen a democratic base for future generations of Estonians.

The Unesco classification system, ISCED, has been introduced as a framework for Estonian education.

Differentiation of secondary education

Secondary education should provide an adequate level of general academic knowledge, practical skills, and culture so as to allow students to cope satisfactorily in various spheres of life and to continue their studies in institutions of higher learning.

In post-reform Estonia, secondary education is defined in the Law on Basic and Upper Secondary (gymnasia) Schools (adopted on 15 September 1993), which states:

"§1.
The present law shall determine the legal status and organisation of the operation of the state and local government (municipal) basic and upper secondary schools.

The legal status and organisation of the operation of basic and upper secondary schools that are owned by physical or legal entities shall be determined by the Law on Private Schools.

§2.
Basic and upper secondary schools shall be comprehensive schools in which each academic year (grade) is based directly on the previous one, thus enabling the smooth transition from one school to another.

A basic school shall be a school that creates opportunities for students to acquire a basic education and to comply with compulsory education requirements. In a basic school there shall be grades 1-9. In order to ensure the availability of education, and to guarantee compliance with the compulsory education requirement, elementary schools (including kindergarten – elemen-

tary schools) may be established, which, according to the needs and possibilities, may have grades 1-6.

An upper secondary school shall be a school that creates opportunities to acquire a secondary education. In an upper secondary school there shall be grades 10-12. Classes of a basic school level, which create opportunities to acquire a basic education, may be integrated into an upper secondary school.

§3.
General education shall be a system of knowledge, skills, proficiency, values and rules of behaviour that enable a person to develop constantly, and who is thus able to live in dignity, to have self-esteem, to honour his or her family, other human beings and nature, and to select and acquire a suitable profession, to act creatively and to be a responsible citizen.

Basic education shall be the minimum of compulsory general education as prescribed by the educational standards determined for this level of education. Acquiring basic education shall create preconditions and entitle a student to continue studies in secondary education.

Acquiring secondary education shall be based on basic education and shall entitle a student to continue studies in order to attend a higher education."

In the Soviet period, however, the concept of secondary education was different. An incomplete form of secondary education was compulsory in the Soviet Union. The transition from voluntary to compulsory education progressed in the following stages: compulsory four-year primary education in 1930 (1940-44 in Estonia), compulsory seven-year education in 1945, and compulsory eight-year education in 1958. Compulsory secondary education was an idea developed in the 1960s and mandated in 1972, but not realised until 1980.

Compulsory schooling initially began at the age of 8, though this age was reduced to 7 in 1944; later, in 1973, experiments with 6-year-olds were started. The actual implementation of this measure occurred in 1986 (for children who are mature for school). The compulsory school age limit was set at 15 in 1940 and raised to 16 in 1958 until the introduction of incomplete compulsory secondary education eliminated the need for such a limit.

This provision was also changed by the Law on Basic and Upper Secondary (gymnasia) Schools (adopted 15 September 1993), which states:

"§17.
A child who turns 7-years-old before 1 October of the current year will be considered as of compulsory school age. A student is subject to compulsory

education until basic education has been obtained or until he or she is 17-years-old."

Profound population changes took place in Soviet Estonia with the mass influx of non-Estonians encouraged by Moscow, which had a significant impact on the system of education. The share of Estonians in the total population decreased from 92% to 62%, and Russian-medium schools were created, separate from Estonian-medium schools, to accommodate Russian-language speakers. Due to the number of Russian language classes required, a typical course of study in Estonian-medium schools lasted eleven years, whereas instruction in Russian-medium schools lasted ten years. In later years the duration of study was lengthened by one year in all schools. As a result of collectivisation, a large part of the rural population moved to urban areas. The number of urban schools increased to comprise two-thirds of the total. Schools in urban areas quickly became overpopulated (see Table 1).

Table 1: Number of students in day-time schools[1]

	Total number of students	Grades		
		1-4	5-9	10-12
Towns				
Tallinn	61 279	23 116	29 668	8 495
Kohtla-Järve	9 280	3 646	4 861	773
Narva	10 993	4 382	5 671	940
Pärnu	7 972	2 740	3 848	1 384
Sillamäe	14 385	5 157	6 619	2 609
Total	**106 786**	**37 917**	**52 080**	**14 444**
Counties				
Harjumaa	13 747	5 395	6 841	1 511
Hiiumaa	1 722	716	840	166
Ida-Virumaa	4 321	1 650	2 104	567
Jõgevamaa	6 100	2 199	2 999	902
Järvemaa	6 472	2 473	3 235	764
Läänemaa	4 928	1 877	2 402	649
Lääne-Virumaa	10 824	4 081	5 310	1 433

1. Schools for the disabled not included.

	Total number of students	Grades		
		1-4	5-9	10-12
Põlvamaa	5 079	2 016	2 458	605
Pärnumaa	5 766	2 381	2 888	497
Raplamaa	5 858	2 222	2 887	749
Saaremaa	5 960	2 216	2 881	863
Tartumaa	6 514	2 512	3 139	863
Valgamaa	5 376	2 034	2 655	687
Viljandimaa	9 462	2 685	4 559	1 218
Võrumaa	6 464	2 460	3 083	921
Total	**98 593**	**37 917**	**48 281**	**12 395**

It is to be noted that the proportion of enrolments in grades 1-4, 5-9 and 10-12 in Tallinn and in the towns as a total does not differ much from that in the counties. Thus in Tallinn, 13,9% of all pupils are enrolled in grades 10-12, 13,5% in the towns and 12,6% in the counties.

Secondary education involved general and vocational education and adult training. The types of general education were: four-year primary school, eight-year incomplete secondary school followed by an option of either continuing at a secondary school (grades 9-11) or going to a vocational school.

In the implementation of compulsory secondary education, it became evident that some students were unable to acquire the education required by the curriculum at a satisfactory level. In an attempt to resolve this problem, teachers were pressured to assess their students in order to disguise the failure of some of them. In addition, collective society served to influence students through special instruction groups set up at work places, and through all-day play groups at schools where students could do homework under the guidance of supervisors. There were also attempts to differentiate schools; for example, boarding schools were opened for students who did not have adequate living conditions at home.

Vocational education was provided in specialised secondary schools, vocational schools (which initially did not provide secondary education), and technical schools (offering one or two years of study for secondary school graduates). In 1980, 15,8% of grade 8 graduates continued their studies in specialised secondary schools and 18,4% in vocational secondary schools. When compulsory secondary education was introduced, vocational schools

were transformed into vocational secondary schools. The latter prepared qualified skilled labourers but the level of general education instruction was weak. In order to implement their unified educational reform, the standards of vocational secondary schools were, in 1984, raised to those of the general education secondary schools.

Secondary schools also taught vocational skills, although they often lacked proper technical facilities and competent teachers. Students could not choose their speciality; instead, these were imposed on them. A study in 1985 (S.Kera) illustrated that only 23,9% of students wanted to continue studies in the vocational speciality that they were learning.

Adults could get secondary education by taking evening and correspondence courses. Following the introduction of compulsory secondary education in 1980, 60% of young workers went to these schools.

For an overview of the structure of the school system in Estonia from 1920 to 1940, see Figure 1. Figure 2 shows the changed structure of the Soviet school system.

Figure 1: The Estonian school system (1920-40)

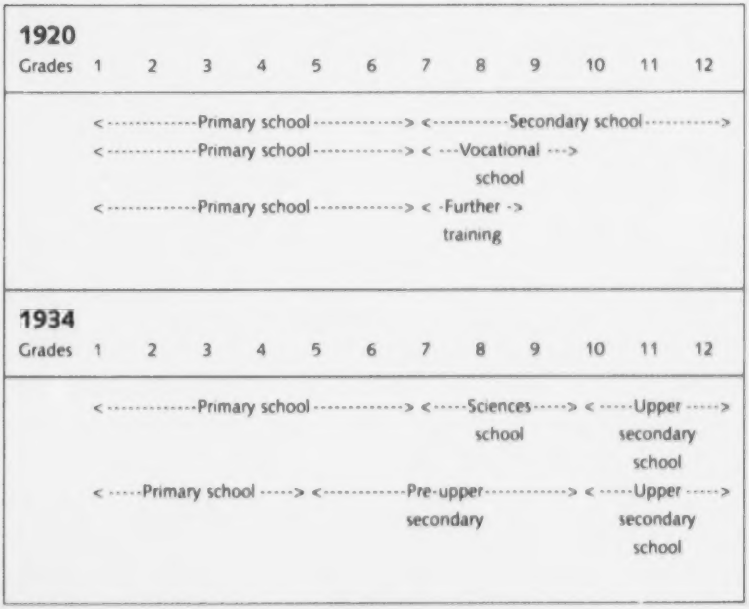

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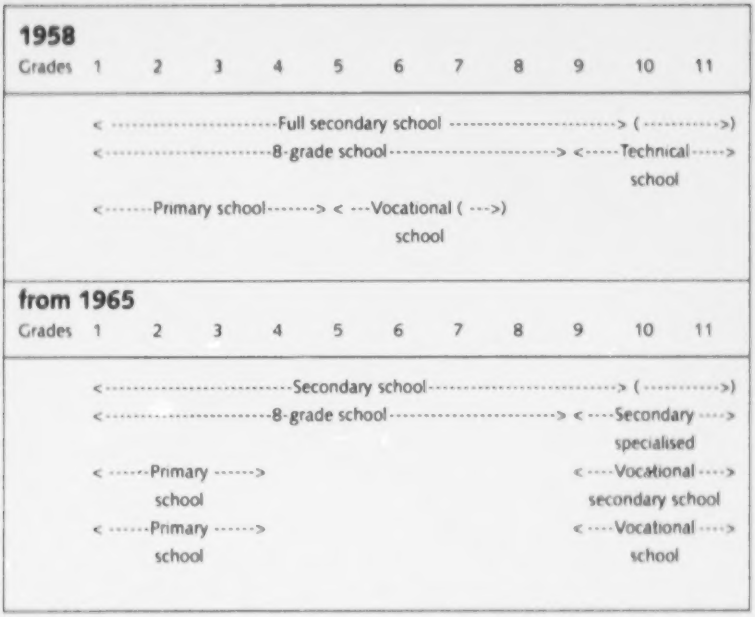
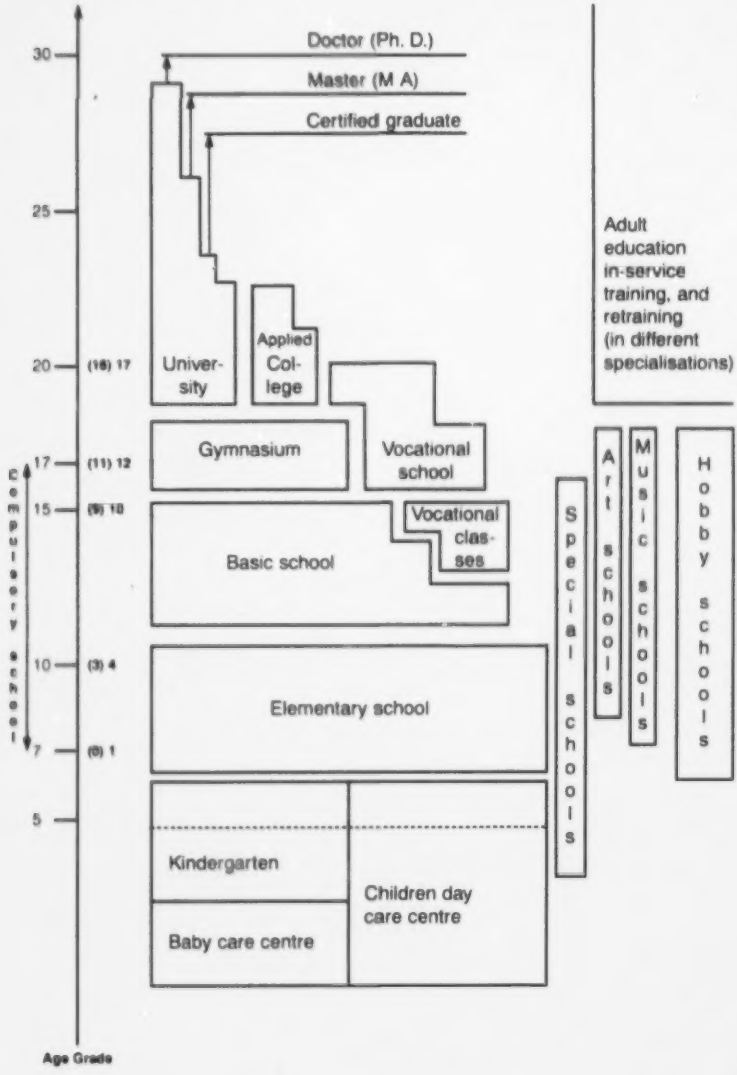
Figure 2: Changes in the Soviet school system



At present, the education system in Estonia, composed of general and vocational education, is being reformed. General education is divided into base, basic and secondary education. Base education is provided by primary schools (grades 1-6). Basic education consists of two levels: level I – grades 1-6, and level II – grades 7-9. Secondary education includes level III – grades 10-12 (known as gymnasium, which is upper secondary education). Upper secondary education offers students the opportunity to choose between various branches of study, including general, humanities, and science.

The Law on Education was adopted in 1992 but the legislation has not yet been fully implemented. Students are obliged to stay at school from age 7 (or 6) until the age of 17. Article 3(2) of the Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Schools defines basic education (grades 1-9) as the minimum amount of compulsory general educational required, and grants all students the right to continue with secondary studies. By the year 2000, all instruction in state upper secondary schools will be conducted in Estonian, the official language stated in the Constitution. Secondary education continues to be free, except for students attending private schools.

Figure 3: An overview of the present educational system.



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Vocational education is also undergoing reform. Unskilled labourers may complete seven or eight grades of basic school and continue their studies in a vocational school, in order to receive basic vocational education. After finishing basic school, it is possible to get additional vocational education in three years and become a skilled worker. In the third year of these studies some students are selected to continue for a fourth year. Some students also continue vocational upper secondary education by taking a shortened course at a vocational educational institution. Vocational secondary education consists of a core education programme that allows students to continue their studies in the same or related field at a higher applied college.

2. Administration of the educational system

System overview and division of responsibility

During Soviet times, the Communist Party supervised and controlled educational administration; both the Supreme Soviet and the Council of Ministers were subordinate to the Party. Fundamental principles of education and the legislative framework to implement educational policy were developed by these official bodies. Educational guidelines were adopted at Party congresses and plenary sessions. The adoption of these guidelines, as directives, was obligatory in all educational institutions from the Ministry of Education to state schools.

Today, the principles and general structure of education in Estonia are determined by the Riigikogu (parliament). The Riigikogu has an education, science and culture committee responsible for doing preparatory work on educational legislation. The government prepares draft laws for submission to the Riigikogu.

The Ministry of Culture and Education is officially responsible for defining and implementing education policy. The ministry drafts educational legislation for submission by the government to the Riigikogu. The ministry draws up administrative guidelines and regulations, opens state schools (schools under state jurisdiction) in conformity with local governments, and issues education licences to both municipal and private schools. State schools, as well as teachers' salaries and educational materials for municipal and private schools, are funded from the state budget.

The State School Board is subordinate to the ministry. The board participates in the development, implementation and monitoring of educational policy, and drafts legal acts for the educational administration.

It is the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture and Education and of the executive branches of local governments to set up and fund a sufficient number of schools to guarantee compulsory school attendance in basic and secondary education.

The executive branch of local governments opens municipal schools and private schools upon request and approves the opening of state schools on their territory upon submission of an application by the Ministry of Culture and Education. Local governments also approve statutes for municipal and private schools, apply to the ministry to get education licences for municipal schools, publicise vacancies for principals of municipal schools, and establish labour contracts with the latter that aim at creating better conditions in the schools.

For the conditions that govern the establishment of schools, please refer to the following excerpt from the Law on Basic and Upper Secondary (gymnasia) Schools (adopted on 15 September 1993):

"§11.
The Ministry of Culture and Education, as well as the local government executive body, shall establish and finance the number of schools necessary for compliance with compulsory education, as well as for the acquisition of basic and secondary education.

§12.
Municipal schools shall be established by the local government executive body. A school servicing a number of local government units shall be established jointly by the executive bodies of these units, based on the educational licence issued by the Ministry of Culture and Education.

The statutes of a school must contain the following information:

- full name, location and category;
- goals and tasks of the school;
- language of instruction;
- indications as to the organisation of instruction and education;
- rights and obligations of students;
- rights and obligations of the school staff;
- criteria and procedures for reorganisation and closure.

The statutes of a municipal school shall be approved by the local government executive body.

The application for an education licence shall be submitted to the Ministry of Culture and Education by the local government executive body at least six months prior to the beginning of the school year.

The application shall be accompanied by the school statutes, curriculum, information on the qualifications of the teachers, reports on the conformity of the rooms (buildings) and the school grounds with sanitary and safety requirements.

The requirements for teacher qualifications, as well as for school rooms (buildings), and the school grounds, shall be determined by the Ministry of Culture and Education.

The Ministry of Culture and Education shall consider the application for an education licence within one month of its receipt.

If the Ministry of Culture and Education denies an education licence on the grounds that the requirements determined in the present article have not been met, it shall present the reasons for denial in writing. After the elimination of the deficiencies, and the submission of the corresponding documents, the licence shall be issued, according to the procedures established by the present law.

§13.
A state school shall be established by the Ministry of Culture and Education, with the agreement of the local government council.

The statutes of a state school shall be approved by the Ministry of Culture and Education.

§14.
A school shall be registered by the local government executive body, according to the procedures determined by law."

Local governments are responsible for the creation of organisational units for administering educational institutions. Currently, this is done by education sections within local governments, however, local government reform in Estonia is not complete. These education sections keep in touch with schools, provide methodological assistance and teacher training, and monitor the implementation of educational policy.

The principal of a school is directly responsible for the work of the institution he/she directs. He/she, along with assistants (whose number is determined by the size of the school), shall determine regulations that ensure the school's efficiency. The official steering body of the school is the faculty council, which

meets to discuss educational issues and curricula, and guides educational policy at the school level.

For a description of the tasks of the various councils, please refer to the following excerpt form the Law on Basic and Upper Secondary (gymnasia) Schools (adopted 15 September 1993):

"§40.
Schools shall have a staff council, whose task shall be the determination, analysis, and evaluation of the teaching and educational activities of the school, and taking the necessary management decisions.

The school teachers and the school doctor shall be members of the staff council.

The responsibilities and the procedures for the operation of the staff council shall be determined by the Ministry of Culture and Education.

§41.
In order to create the necessary conditions for the productive operation of a municipal school, the local government executive body shall establish a board of supervisors, whose model statutes shall be defined by the Ministry of Culture and Education.

The board of supervisors shall be a permanent body, whose task shall be the supervision of the co-operation between the school teachers, the local government council, parents, alumni, and organisations supporting the school, in the teaching and education activities of the school, and assistance in the creation of appropriate conditions for this activity.

The board of supervisors of an upper secondary school shall consist of a representative of the local government council and of the students, of two teachers nominated by the staff council, and five representatives from amongst parents, alumni, and organisations supporting the school, as decided by the general meeting of parents.

The board of supervisors of a basic school shall comprise a representative of the local government council and of the teachers, and five representatives from amongst the parents, alumni and the organisations supporting the school, as decided by the general meeting of parents.

The board of supervisors of an elementary school shall comprise a representative of the local government council and of the teachers, and three representatives from parents, and the organisations supporting the school, as decided by the general meeting of parents.

The board of supervisors shall elect a chairman and deputy chairman from amongst its members. The meetings of the board of supervisors shall be held once a month during the school year. The procedures for operation shall be determined by the Ministry of Culture and Education.

In addition to the tasks listed in the present law, the board of supervisors shall make proposals to the local government executive body for the solution of the problems that the school is faced with.

The principal shall report to the board of supervisors.

§42.
The Ministry of Culture and Education shall form a nine-member state school council, comprised of specialists and parents.

The state school council shall elect a chairman and deputy chairman from amongst its members. The council shall operate according to the procedures determined by the Ministry of Culture and Education.

The rights and obligations of the board of supervisors as determined in the present law shall apply to the state school council. The state school council shall make proposals to the Ministry of Culture and Education and the Ministry for Social Affairs for the better resolution of questions concerning the school.

A principal of a state school shall report to the council."

Vocational schools as well as general schools have principals and assistants on educational and vocational issues.

Figure 4: Different levels in educational management

National level

Riigikogu Commissions of Education, Science and Culture	Government of Estonia Ministry of Culture and Education State School Board

Municipal level

Executive Body of Local Government
Education Section

School level

Administration
Faculty Council

Administrative status of private education

Private schools as educational institutions based on private ownership are in an early stage of existence in Estonia, although they existed in interwar, independent Estonia. This kind of school, and its foundation and activities are recognised by the Law on Private Schools adopted by the Riigikogu in 1993.

The necessary prerequisites for establishing a private school concern: teachers, curriculum and appropriate buildings or rooms. The founder of the school must apply to the local government to get an establishment permit, submit school statutes for local government approval, and apply for an education licence issued by the Ministry of Culture and Education. Before opening the school, the owner must register the school with the local government on which territory the school is situated, in order to get a registration certificate.

The owner of the private school must establish the curriculum and the educational regulations of the institution. He/she shall determine the language of instruction. If the official language is not the language of instruction, it will be compulsory to teach Estonian in the basic school and upper secondary school as a second language. The owner covers the administrative costs, while educational costs are covered from the state budget, but only to the

extent to which the school's curriculum complies with state educational standards.

The Ministry of Culture and Education monitors instruction and education according to established procedures. While the owner of the school can establish supplementary requirements for student assessment and graduation, input may also be given by the ministry. Pending approval, a graduation diploma granted from private schools is equal in all respects to public school diplomas.

As of 1994, there are twenty-one private schools (including four Russian-medium schools) registered in Estonia. The first private vocational schools have been opened, along with private higher educational institutions. Among the private schools, there are a number of humanities-oriented and alternative schools.

II. Issues section

1. The process of policy-making and innovation

The responsibilities of the Ministry of Culture and Education

The Ministry of Culture and Education is the highest educational authority in Estonia, responsible for the formulation of state policy for culture, education, science, youth and sport. The ministry develops curricula for national educational institutions (not universities). The ministry is also responsible for implementing and monitoring legislation for reforms. In the field of vocational education, the ministry co-operates with other ministries (for example, those responsible for employment) and the Labour Office.

The Department of Educational Policy is one of the key structural units within the ministry, responsible for the co-ordination, elaboration, and implementation of educational policy in the general and vocational education of adolescents and adults. The department is also responsible for determining the content of education and establishing and promoting national educational classification standards. The Department of Educational Policy also develops requirements for educationalists and regulates the supervision of educational work.

The Department of Educational Policy co-operates with the State School Board under the jurisdiction of the ministry. The board is responsible for the actual implementation of educational policy in Estonia. The state School Board participates in policy planning by dealing with curricula for both general and vocational education, preparing and co-ordinating educational texts, leading and co-ordinating subject-related and methodological work, implementing and launching educational projects, collecting educational information, and supervising state educational institutions.

Educational innovations spread through in-service training. The Teacher Training Centre, under the jurisdiction of the ministry, helps to upgrade and implement educational policy through in-service training of educationalists, publi-

cation of methodological texts, and preservation and promotion of pedagogical heritage. The training centre operates in conjunction with the ministry's Department of Educational Policy and the State School Board.

The role of other public administrations: regional and local

The education sections under the jurisdiction of local governments and the ministry are responsible for implementing educational policy at local levels. The education sections elaborate educational development programmes based on local circumstances and manage their implementation together with local government and educational institutions. It is responsible for the public supervision of regional municipal institutions and private schools, and is accountable for the condition of education within its region to the local government and the ministry.

A local advisory board can be created by the education section to function as a consulting body. It may be comprised of school counsellors, faculty from educational institutions, representatives from the executive body of the local government, and other authorities closely related with education (for example those working in public health or child protection services). The county government or municipality must confirm the members. The head of the education section is the chairman of this advisory board. The task of the board is to provide qualified assistance in developing programmes that promote regional socio-economic and cultural development, and to aid in the formation and implementation of educational decisions. The advisory board can also advise on educational development programmes before their approval by the regional government, and suggest changes in the regional school network and in the work of municipal institutions. The board can make recommendations on educational issues specific to its region (for example, fulfilling the mandatory schooling requirement).

School management is responsible for setting up the necessary working conditions and for in-house supervision of the educational institution. Schools with at least three teachers have a permanent faculty council, which serves to determine, analyse, and assess educational processes and to discuss various issues of management. The council discusses trends, work plans, educational goals, and school rules, and evaluates school statutes. The council is chaired by the principal of the school, and comprises all full-time faculty members and the chairman of the board of trustees in general educational institutions. Each teacher is involved in the development and implementation of educational policy, where the faculty council approves school curricula, including the content of courses in foreign languages, elective and optional subjects, home instruction and remedial teaching.

The faculty council of each municipal school delegates one member to the board of trustees. This board is a permanent body whose purpose is to co-ordinate joint efforts among faculty, local government, parents, alumni and school support organisations that positively influence the teaching and educational work in schools. Members of the board serve a three-year term and are chosen in elections held by the region or town council, by the faculty council, by student representation in local schools, and at a meeting of parents. The region or town council establishes and approves the board. The board of trustees is involved in educational development, as it reviews and evaluates school development plans and acts to cultivate a healthy environment for teaching and learning within local schools.

Advisory and consultation functions and institutions, and their status

At present there is no special education council in Estonia, independent of government authorities, which would deal with educational issues. The Estonian Educational Workers' Union represents its members' interests in work groups, develops draft legislation, and evaluates draft educational legislation already under examination in the Riigikogu. There are several professional educational organisations (for example, the Speech Therapists' Association, the Music Teachers' Association, the Society for Teachers of the Estonian Language, etc.) in existence. However, these do not have any essential influence on legislation. It is the ministry's practice to contact such groups while working on specific legal acts in order to take into consideration the opinion of various interest groups.

After a long period of forced inactivity during the Soviet occupation, the Estonian Educational Society, initially founded in 1923, was re-established in 1988. The Popular Education Association was founded in 1993. Its aims are to encourage self-improvement of popular educators and develop a system for popular education in Estonia, to promote popular adult education, to reopen folk high schools, and to organise folk high school courses, study circles, one-day seminars, courses, field trips, etc. A Popular Education Conference occurred in 1994. A Forum of Estonian Popular Education took place in 1992, which aimed to promote the notion of human rights within the realm of education. This humanistic approach is a relatively new concept to Estonian educational policy-makers, but it has become a key issue in private schools and alternative schools.

Estonian secondary school principals have established the Estonian School Principals' Association, a forum for the discussion of educational issues from the directors' point of view.

In 1989, the Estonian Academic Pedagogical Society (EAPS), initially founded in 1930, was re-established. It engages in discussion of educational policy. Estonian educational scientists, post-secondary school faculty members and other educationalists comprise its membership (ninety-four members in 1993).

The role of other governmental administrations

If an educational issue becomes a problem which cannot be resolved by the ministry and it is an issue that should be handled at the government level or by the Riigikogu, the ministry will have to submit a relevant draft. Regulations, ordinances and draft laws are co-ordinated with the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and, especially, the Ministry of Finance. If no agreement is reached, the final decision is made by the body adopting the legal act, namely parliament.

2. External support to policy-making

Data collection

Each school is responsible for collating statistics on courses offered, teacher and student populations, students' enrolment statistics, etc. This information is sent to the local education section, which collects the regional data and submits it to the National Statistics Office. The latter assembles the data on a nationwide basis and shares it with the statistics department of the Ministry of Culture and Education. This department is responsible for assembling data surveys on Estonian education and distributes them to schools and organisations upon request.

Educational research on secondary education

Educational research has always been conducted in Estonia. Currently, curriculum development is an issue attracting much attention. Curriculum content is developed in co-operation with various national and local authorities, including state and local educational administration, schools and teachers. The general vision of the national curriculum has been outlined in the past two years. The next stage of development involves the harmonisation of new educational concepts and their introduction into teacher training programmes, and the participation of teachers and schools in the process of curriculum development. The development of the national curriculum relies upon research on the student population: the teacher and the learner in the study process; students' social competency; identification of learning habits; children's ethical development; the educational, pedagogical, and psycho-

logical aspects of development; health and physical development; opinion polls among adolescents, etc.

In addition to research within Estonia, a number of international studies have been conducted on Estonia's educational system. For example, the *World Bank Country Study on Estonia* (1993) discussed the education system and its current issues and problems.

Pedagogical research courses (begun in 1962) played a very important role in the development of education in Estonia. In 1972, the graduates reorganised the courses into the Teachers' Association for Pedagogical Research, which offered an opportunity for refresher schooling in Estonia. In this way, theory and practice have been connected. A teacher-researcher attempts to identify innovative new approaches and attitudes in education. Over the last thirty years, research done by members of the association has been published in forty-six Estonian and thirteen Russian publications. The association's main research is in the following fields: the history of Estonian schools and teaching, including the heritage of outstanding educationalists; subject didactics (language didactics, group work in the classroom, individual work, etc.); special pedagogics, psychodiagnostic, personality development problems, etc.

The State School Board is in the process of establishing a monitoring system, based on a network of schools, to improve the accountability and quality of teaching. Attention will be given to local curriculum development efforts in an attempt to raise national standards, as well as to the cost-effective organisation of schooling. This project is in its preparatory stages and will be launched in 1995.

Arrangements for educational development work

In 1993 the following essential laws on education were passed:

– the Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Schools, specifying their legal status and procedures;

– the Law on Private Schools, specifying the establishment of private schools and their procedures;

– the Law on Pre-School Institutions (being the first of its kind in the Republic of Estonia). This law stipulates the functions of pre-school institutions: the care of children and the provision of pre-school education (preceding basic education). It also contains new principles for organising children into age groups and revised size limits for these groups. The law will come into effect on 1 January 1996;

– the Law on Adult Education covers training in order to acquire qualifications, as well as vocational and adult education. This law was created upon public initiative. The law provides legal guarantees for voluntary adult education.

Various regulatory acts (regulations, guidelines and instructions) regulate the application of this new legislation. The following are regulatory acts created in the last few years:

– guidelines regulating school management: opening, reorganising and closing municipal schools, recommendations for general school statutes, a statute for a general school faculty council, changes in issuing education licences, model statutes for the board of trustees for a municipal school and council for a public school, national monitoring system, etc.

– documents: regulations for issuing secondary and basic school graduation diplomas, educational documents and forms, etc.

– faculty-related issues: evaluation of faculty members, determining salary categories and the method of evaluating faculty members, training of school principals, ways to provide in-service training and methods of qualification for principals, etc.

– student-related issues: students' enrolment, expulsion and leaving school, assessment of conditions for students' behaviour and diligence in general schools, reporting potential enrolment, etc.

– study-related issues: guidelines for home and hospital instruction, examination management, individual graduation, study plans for extensive instruction classes, assessment of students' achievement, etc.

Legislation regarding vocational education is still being developed (namely, the Law on Vocational Education and the Law on Vocational Institutions). The consultative council of the ministry deals with vocational education concepts.

Facilities for external guidance and counselling

Education consultants in Estonia serve as curriculum consultants, although as yet no special training in this field has been provided for them. Regional subject-centred units provide methodological assistance to teachers of these subjects. The future aim is that these units will offer in-service training programmes to make the advisory service more efficient.

Development of educational tests and examinations

Use of teacher-originated tests in Soviet schools was prohibited. Teachers based their assessment of students on national standards established by the state. Teachers felt pressured into grading their students favourably, which hid the reality that many students did not deserve high marks. Objective methods of assessment were applied in Estonia as well. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, researchers and educators used tests that were mainly psychological, and sociological tests created by western educators. In the 1960s, priority was given to standardised subject tests similar to psychological ones. Several tests were administered in maths (A. Telgmaa, O. Kärner) and foreign languages (R. Selg, V. Kokkota). Professors J. Mikk and I. Unt compiled programme tests measuring the level of gained knowledge (G. Karu in physics, A. Töldsepp in chemistry). On the pre-school level, reading skills and other basic skills have also been measured by tests.

Estonia still does not have its own national standards to measure academic achievement. The numerical scale of grading (from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)) and the examinations used to assess students' achievement are not representative enough to determine their educational level. Standards are based on each school's curriculum, the goals of individual subjects, and the extent to which students have absorbed the material.

At present, the State School Board is researching assessment methods to establish national standards. The assessment of academic performance should be based more on students' creativity, whereas current examination methods depend largely on rote memory.

Externally provided psychological and medical assistance as well as assistance in the field of social work

Many complicated situations in schools require psychological assistance. Several larger schools employ psychologists, and local medical services and social workers are involved if necessary.

The Ministry of Social Affairs together with the Ministry of Culture and Education are in the process of detailing a health studies curriculum. The introduction of health studies to students at all levels is very important. The Ministry of Social Affairs is attempting to provide for the instruction of this new subject in all schools. Medical personnel and other specialists are running in-service training for teachers teaching health studies.

3. Financing and budgeting

Responsibility for school financing

In the past, the state funded school buildings, equipment, salaries and other expenses. A number of public schools are still fully funded from the state budget. Most schools, however, are municipal schools. Local governments finance building- and maintenance-related expenses for municipal schools, and also pay salaries for non-teaching staff members. All teachers' salaries and teaching materials are funded from the state budget.

School assets are comprised mostly of land (given to the owner for purposeful use and possession), buildings, structures, and equipment. The use of assets is regulated by school statutes in compliance with valid legislation. School principals are responsible for preserving and maintaining the property and are obliged to demand co-operation from both staff and students.

Criteria for financing

Basic and secondary education is free for all students. Financing depends on the type of school: state general education schools are state funded; municipal schools are funded by local authorities, except for teachers' salaries and teaching materials, which are state-funded. Private schools are financed by student fees, as well as by the state (for teachers' salaries and teaching materials).

The financing of private education

Private school students must pay fees for attendance. School owners pay for buildings and facilities, and salaries for maintenance staff. Teachers' salaries and teaching materials are funded from the national budget, but only if the curricula is in compliance with national educational standards, and then on an equal basis with similar public or municipal schools.

The share of private sources of financing in publicly financed schools

Public schools have no private sources of financing. In the past, vocational school students received full remuneration for work done by them in the factory, etc., which was assigned to them as the place for work experience. Today, the student receives 50% of this remuneration; the rest is given to the school. The remuneration system for work practice in vocational schools is being revised.

Cost for students/parents

Textbooks can be used free of charge but remain the property of the school. In the past, if students required the use of public transportation to travel to school, this was free. This issue now rests with local authorities to determine. In any case, students are entitled to a discount bus fare, which is determined by local authorities. Meals were once provided at a reduced price. Enterprises and collective farms often paid for meals of their employees' children. Today, meals are paid for by parents; local governments can subsidise the cost of meals at their discretion. Meals in boarding schools are free. Previously, a school uniform was compulsory and approved of by the Ministry of Education. This uniform is no longer required by any schools except the Maritime Academy.

Statistical data in the overall educational budget

Table 1 displays the expenditure on education during the Soviet era.

Table 1: Expenditure on education (in millions of roubles)

Year	Total
1970	129,7
1975	175,4
1980	218,3
1985	268,4
1986	280,2
1987	308,2
1988	341,3
1989	375,6

These figures do not actually represent increased spending on education, since the value of the currency has changed over the years. For example, in 1985 the total amount of money budgeted for education (including capital investment, purchase of equipment, and major building repairs) had increased 1,5 times compared to the amount budgeted in 1975, whereas its share in the national budget decreased from 15,4% to 12,6%. Education's share of the budget was 23% in 1950, 10,8% in 1988, 11,1% in 1981 and 1990, and 11,8% in 1991.

In the Soviet era, 83% of the allocated money was used for wages (including sickness benefits and pensions for working retirees); 17% was left for teaching expenses, school maintenance, and other expenses. As enrolment in

vocational schools increased, vocational schools benefitted most from the increase in allocations.

Table 2: Average expenditure per student (in roubles)

School	1980	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
General education schools	208	252	266	294	315	354
Vocational schools	-	925	966	1 013	1 159	1 260
Vocational specialised schools	698	737	767	856	899	987
Higher education institutions	1 352	1 699	1 733	1 719	1 756	1 850
Orphanages	1 390	1 903	2 177	2 659	3 521	3 853

From Table 2, it can be seen that the smallest expenditure is for students attending general education schools. In 1980, the educational expenditure per vocational school student was seven times higher than for a secondary school student, while that of a child with special needs was nine times higher.

In 1985, the state spent an average of 252 roubles on each secondary school student (excluding building, maintenance and equipment costs); this amount was 220 roubles in urban areas and 367 roubles in rural areas due to the smaller class size in rural schools.

The educational budget has not changed greatly in independent Estonia. In 1991, 2 035 roubles (taking into account the decreased value of the rouble) were spent per secondary school student, the ratio being 2,5:1 for money spent on students of higher education. The share of education in the total budget was 15,7% in 1992. In this year, the annual cost of instruction per general education school student was 884 EEK; per vocational institution student, 991 EEK; per child with special needs, 4 706 EEK (5,3 times more than per general education school student); per student in higher education, 1 858 EEK (2,1 times more than per general education school student).

4. School and society

Relations with employers

The Soviet system encouraged students to work for the community, which meant compulsory potato picking, clean-ups, etc. Since 1971, students have had a compulsory amount of community work to perform: for grades 1-3, 20

hours per academic year and for grades 4-11, 50 hours. This is no longer the case.

Schools were obliged to keep contacts with enterprises in which students could perform easy jobs. However, it was difficult to fulfil this obligation, as there was no work available for minors. These actually disturbed the production process, and the contacts between employers and students were limited to site visits, meetings, concerts given by students, etc. It was simpler to provide work in agriculture. Since 1966, students from grades 9 and 10 could spend their summers serving in the Estonian Students' Brigade, which was very popular. In 1981, there were over 6 000 student members divided into 250 groups. Collective and state farms paid for the seasonal work done by these groups. In the 1980s, groups from Estonia participated in exchange programmes with other Soviet republics and eastern bloc countries. Younger students in grades 7 and 8 could attend summer camps. In 1983, 13 000 pupils participated in 400 camps. In addition to these programmes, since 1972, several schools have had students supervised by specialists performing various jobs in the local forests.

In the winter of 1994, the Riigikogu reviewed a vocational education law, which outlines the introduction of incentives such as tax cuts to those companies who work closely with and provide assistance to schools. Companies will be encouraged to provide money, materials, guidance, and opportunities for training. Furthermore, in the autumn of 1993, the State School Board and the Ministry of Culture and Education conducted seminars with the aim of bringing together companies and schools once again.

Relations with national, regional and local authorities

During the Soviet era, local authorities assisted schools in allocating proper housing and land, and in providing financial help. It is generally felt that local and regional authorities should pay more attention to the leisure time of adolescents. There is currently no youth board in Estonia, and a youth policy has yet to be elaborated.

Relations with associations and interest groups

In the past, society actively interfered in leisure time activities. The school was responsible for organising holidays, especially summer holidays. Leisure time activity used to be compulsory for students; they were required to participate in hobby groups. Each student had to belong to one or two groups even if he/she did not find one of interest. Estonia had a Youth Sports Organisation, and military sports games were organised. At present, any activity undertaken by students is voluntary. National contests in amateur arts and creative

work are organised. National song and folk dance festivals for schoolchildren have taken place since 1961. In 1993 up to 28 000 students participated in these festivals. The Students' Scientific Society was founded on the initiative of the Estonian Academy of Sciences in 1974. There are 26 subdivisions with 300-400 secondary school students participating. This society organises scientific seminars and conferences.

Students' research on neighbourhood and nature conservation, organised since the 1960s, has recently gained popularity. The green movement, environmental protection and heritage movement gained popularity in 1987-88. The young were the initiators of these movements. Since 1988, scout and guide movements and the Association of Estonian Defence League Youth Organisations have been restored. The YMCA and the Tallinn Green Movement are active as well.

Youth Assembly New Estonia (the equivalent of the international youth organisation, the 4H Club) was established in January 1993. It has twenty clubs all over Estonia, which organise various activities in the countryside and international competitions for members. Youth groups have been exchanged with Switzerland, Finland and Luxembourg. There are also numerous branches of the YMCA across Estonia and membership is open to all students.

Relations with parent-teacher associations

Schools have always been obligated to co-operate with parents. Each class teacher is a representative of the school and responsible for parent relations. Each class has a parents' committee, which monitors students' behaviour and class participation, and deals with various problems in school life such as attendance. These committees promote good relations between schools, parents and students.

5. Administration and organisation of the educational system and schools

The educational system as a complex organisation

Pedagogical structure

Administration and organisation of education was rigidly centralised in the Soviet system. General secondary school programmes were not differentiated, but conformed to all-Union blanket programmes. It was impossible to reflect traditional Estonian national characteristics within the Estonian education system. Music and art studies were undervalued. The Estonian Ministry

of Culture and Education attempted to mitigate this situation with extended extracurricular activities. In 1961, it was allowed to increase the number of foreign language lessons, and a number of schools (or classes) specialising in foreign language instruction began operating in Estonia. In 1966, the number of optional lessons was increased and some subjects were taught more intensively from grade 9 onwards (for example, mathematics, physics, biology and chemistry). The ministry permitted the more intensive instruction of music, art and foreign language classes. Specialised classes opened in eighty secondary schools (one-third of the total number of schools) and survive to this day.

Secondary schools provide a number of branches of study, including those in general, humanities and science subjects. Apart from the core education, students can choose elective and optional subjects. Each school is responsible for developing its programme in compliance with the core education and the speciality of its branch(es). Students can now choose schools more suitable to their abilities and skills. In addition, each school has the right to introduce special subjects.

An attempt was made during Soviet times to assimilate vocational schools with secondary schools by introducing general education in the former, but now efforts are focused on differentiating vocational schools in the field of general education, as well as in the various vocations. A list of specialities differentiating vocational schools was approved in 1991.

Secondary level education and training outside the secondary system

The practice of combining work and studies will probably increase as Estonia's market economy develops. It is possible to get a secondary education in some twenty-four evening schools. These schools use the same curriculum as day schools, but the process is more intensive – the same amount of work is covered in fewer hours.

Academic achievement in evening schools has been low: only 69,3% of the 1992/93 student intake managed to complete their courses. Most of the students are quite young; in the past, the population of evening schools consisted of many students aged 15 and younger (beginning from grade 6), and many are drop-outs from day schools. The requirements for evening school enrolment are: a minimum age of 17 (the age at which obligatory education is no longer applicable) and nine years of previous education.

Evening schools are one form of adult education; popular education, an opportunity to choose freely what to learn, is another form. Adult ideological-political education was provided free of charge in the so-called Marxist-Leninist universities during Soviet times. The Law on Adult Education passed

by the Riigikogu in 1993 provides legal guarantees for voluntary adult education. Such a system should develop upon local initiative. County or municipal governments co-ordinate the adult educational institutions and track their development on the regional level, while the Ministry of Culture and Education works on the national level.

Recently, over twenty popular educational adult training centres (similar to Scandinavian folk high schools) have been established. Teachers' training has been carried out in Swedish folk high schools with Swedish assistance. Adult vocational training is one of the possible tracks in many vocational schools and companies, and in about forty adult training centres. Various private sources also provide in-service vocational training courses. The training of the unemployed is becoming a vital part of labour policy.

Rules and criteria for admission to secondary education

The national criterion is numerically measured on a five-point scale. Students receive the highest mark, a "5", for excellent work. Marks are given in each subject three times in an academic year, once every three months (twice a year in secondary schools). At the end of each academic year, each student is given a cumulative annual mark.

Criteria for graduation are set for each subject. No standardised tests are used.

Some schools (especially schools with specialties in languages, mathematics, etc.) use different entrance procedures, including educational tests.

The legal entitlement for admission to upper secondary education is the basic school diploma. Students are entitled to continue with secondary education on the basis of their grade 4 report.

Rules and criteria for grade-to-grade promotion

Grade-to-grade promotion occurs in compliance with guidelines established in 1992. Promotion to grade 1 in general education schools is based on the class teacher's recommendations. In grades 2-6, it is based on students' annual marks. From grade 7 onwards students take promotion examinations, and in order to finish basic school and secondary school more examinations are taken. The final decisions for grade-to-grade promotion, additional studies, repetition of an exam or the entire academic year, admission to graduation examinations, finishing school and issuing school graduation diplomas rests with the faculty council.

Students may undertake additional studies or repeat an examination in order to finish a grade. A student whose annual or cumulative mark (after examinations) in all subjects is at least "3" (satisfactory) will be promoted to the next grade.

Students can study according to an individually-designed programme. In this case, the faculty council will decide at the end of the school year which grade such students belong to.

Students in grades 2-6 who have one or two unsatisfactory annual marks will conduct additional studies for two weeks. The decision on promotion is based upon their performance during these two weeks. Students in grades 7-8 and 10-11 who have two unsatisfactory annual or cumulative marks receive additional study tasks. Their promotion will be decided on after the examination has been repeated or additional study tasks fulfilled successfully.

Students in grades 2-8 who have three or more unsatisfactory marks are not promoted to the next grade unless they conduct additional studies or pass a new examination. As an exception based on a decision passed by the faculty council, students with up to two unsatisfactory annual or cumulative marks can conditionally be promoted to the next grade. Students from grades 10-11 having unsatisfactory annual or cumulative marks are not promoted and may repeat the grade in exceptional cases. Otherwise, they may be deleted from the list of students. A student having up to two unsatisfactory annual or cumulative marks can finish basic school without repeating an exam. A student under 16 having three or more unsatisfactory annual or cumulative marks must repeat the grade, while a student older than 16 will be deleted from the list of students. If a secondary school graduate has up to two unsatisfactory cumulative marks, the student may repeat examinations up to 1 September; in the case of a student having more than three unsatisfactory marks, they will get a report card and can resume secondary school after independent studies.

Programmes for children with special needs

Eight different kinds of schools exist for disabled students in Estonia, providing instruction for children with partial and complete visual, auditory, physical and mental impairments. There are forty-one schools for such children in Estonia. The Ministry of Culture and Education and the Ministry of Social Affairs are responsible for managing the problems of disabled students. Physically disabled children follow the same curriculum as non-disabled students. Mentally disabled children have a different curriculum, which was created in co-operation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and which usually takes eleven years to complete instead of nine.

Except in certain rare instances, disabled children have typically not been integrated into the general school system. This segregation parallels Soviet society's inability to deal directly with the question of the disabled as functional elements of society. Until very recently, there have been few concrete aids for the disabled in Estonian cities. However, plans are currently being drafted for greater integration of disabled students in the school system.

The possibility for the disabled to choose a profession differs depending on the kind of disability. For the mentally disabled, the main potential for professional preparation is the Special Boarding School. A small proportion of these people continue their studies in the professional classes at special boarding school (grade 10) and only a few can enter special groups of vocational schools. People with physical disabilities can acquire a qualification for certain jobs at vocational schools.

Training for teachers wishing to teach in schools for the disabled is generally acquired at Tartu University. The Department of Special Education within the Philosophy Department offers a full course for such training. Annual admission to this programme is approximately thirty students and graduates are often employed by special schools and classes, in the medical environment (outpatient, audiological and neurological clinics), and at day-care centres and institutions for children with moderate and severe impairment.

Aside from the course at Tartu University, the Tallinn Pedagogical University offers special courses on moderate and severe retardation, autism, behavioural disorders, aphasia, voice disorders and visual impairment. Starting in 1993, students in these courses at the Pedagogical University must choose between two general study tracks after some initial basic education. One of these tracks is academic-oriented, the other is speech therapy-oriented.

For ethnic minorities, cultural societies run Sunday schools in which the mother tongue (for example, Armenian), national culture and the history of the nation is taught. The relevant community or embassy receives educational textbooks from the native land. Some minority groups have arranged the setting up of special classes within state schools (for example, a Ukrainian language class at a Russian school). According to constitutional law the Estonian language is a compulsory subject beginning from grade 3 onwards. The Law on Cultural Autonomy for Minorities has been adopted in Estonia. One of the best examples of the implementation of this law is the Tallinn Jewish Gymnasium, a state school.

There are no special schools for the gifted in Estonia. Specialised classes with more intensive instruction compensate for this lack. Individual work super-

vised by teachers is most important in addressing the needs of advanced students.

Place and evolution of special education

Some students need temporary remedial teaching based on special curricula. General education schools have set up remedial classes for short-term instruction for students lagging behind due to a prolonged absence from school.

In Estonia, students with special needs (4 812 students in 1992) are taught at special schools. The mentally retarded go to schools for the disabled, which provide a basic education only; others can obtain secondary education in twelve years. Students are also taught how to cope with and overcome their disabilities. Special education is also provided in boarding schools.

Internal organisation of support within schools

Organisation and utilisation of pedagogical and career documentation within the school

Schools must keep the following official records and registers:

– a class register reflecting teacher/pupil performance. Teachers' entries made for each lesson provide a survey of the content of education. The class register also contains data on pupils and parents;

– a file on each student, kept for seventy-five years. This file contains information about each student, including the year of enrolment, transfers between schools, and graduation;

– a record of student attendance, including absences and lateness;

– a register of replacement lessons;

– a register of school graduation diplomas for both basic schools and secondary schools.

Schools also have:

– a lesson division plan and applicable guidelines for its use;

– a timetable compiled in the school;

– school house rules;

– job descriptions attached to employment contracts.

Teachers have:

- a study plan compiled by the teacher;
- lesson notes;
- a subject-specific syllabus.

Place of internal guidance and counselling

Guidance means in Estonia, primarily guiding the faculty towards implementing educational tasks facing the school.

Authoritarian leadership prevailed in Soviet times, when principals and faculties were merely fulfilling objectives defined by the state. The present leadership is attempting to restore democracy to the educational process and promote creative co-operation between administrators and faculties in the elaboration and implementation of school improvement plans. The principal and the faculty can only realise this plan in co-operation with each other.

Subject committees on the school level and internal monitoring provide methodological assistance to teachers. Recently, relations with schools abroad have started developing, and teachers' professional counselling has become more versatile. Each school is also responsible for parent counselling.

Curriculum development and adaptation

The Curriculum Work Group of Tallinn Pedagogical University has developed the basic principles for the curriculum in basic school and upper secondary school (gymnasium). The draft curriculum was compiled by the State School Board in 1993. Throughout 1994, the board developed and improved the draft. The terminology and content are to be clarified, supplementary materials for the curriculum compiled, and a list of educational texts and study aids created. The curriculum for special needs schools is a modified version of the basic school curriculum. A new applicable lesson division plan is also being developed, along with a modern teachers' in-service training system based on the new curriculum. The second draft of the curriculum will be translated into Russian and the general provisions of the curriculum for Russian-medium schools will be detailed. The second version of the curriculum will be submitted to the Ministry of Culture and Education by the end of 1994 for evaluation and approval. The introduction and implementation of the new curriculum is scheduled to occur within ten years, following positive evaluation.

Health care and psychological assistance

By law, each local school authority must guarantee medical service for every child. The specifics of this service are defined by individual district governments, which receive the necessary funds from the ministry and distribute them to local schools. The existing system requires further organisation and improvement to assess current needs and the best way to satisfy them.

In the past, strong links were established between schools, and hospitals and out-patient clinics. Under the Soviet system, every school with over 2 500 students would have a doctor on staff and schools with between 700 and 2 500 students would have a nurse on duty. Many smaller schools in one district would often group together to utilise the services of one doctor. This system was in effect until 1990.

There is a dire need for improved services in the area of psychological counselling. Currently, only approximately 20% of Estonian secondary schools have a staff psychologist, whose responsibility is both to teach psychology and be available for students in need of advice and support. The latter occurs infrequently as there is no organised system in place that students may use regularly.

The present – and temporary – situation marks a change from the days of the Soviet era where every school had at least one psychologist on staff. Again, there was no organised system of psychological counselling, but there was psychological instruction in every school. The decrease in the number of psychologists is a result of the current range of salaries for psychologists, as teachers, who tend to be paid less than their colleagues in other sectors of employment.

At present, aside from various telephone help-line services, students may turn for counselling to one of the many family counselling centres in Estonia. These are municipally-funded organisations, which offer, for a small fee, individual and family guidance and therapy for a wide range of problems. Despite their existence, such centres remain an inaccessible and unappealing alternative for individual students in need of private counselling or follow-up care.

This situation will change in the next few years as the country's first social workers and professional psychological counsellors graduate from new courses: a four-year undergraduate course at the Tallinn Pedagogical University for secondary school counsellors; a social work course at Tartu University; and a non-credit, two-and-a-half-year course offered through the Pedagogical University (begun in September 1992), which is meant for professionals who wish to specialise in an area of school pedagogical coun-

selling and awards graduates a certificate, the credibility of which has yet to be ascertained.

Role of remedial teaching and extra tuition

There are two possibilities for students to receive extra tuition. One is for the student requiring assistance to join a study circle organised by the school, which offers valuable practical skills and knowledge to the learners. Those students who need remedial teaching can be instructed after school hours. Often, students themselves initiate smaller study groups in various subject areas in order to get supplementary tutoring.

Advanced students may need extra tuition if they show more interest in various subjects than their classmates. In order to nourish their interest and sustain their abilities, teachers give them additional assignments for self-study. In this way teachers can coach these students for participation in subject contests or olympiades. Under their teacher's guidance, students carry out research in certain fields. As a result of extra tuition, the most able students may join the Students' Scientific Society.

This society has contributed to the growth of the next generation of scholars and researchers. Those students who in their early school years choose their future vocation generally become good specialists in the field they have chosen.

6. Schools as community-based institutions

Behavioural rules and prescriptions

Rules of behaviour were formerly prescribed by the Ministry of Culture and Education. On the end-of-term report cards behaviour was assessed on a 5-point scale: 5 – excellent; 4 – good; 3 – satisfactory; 2 – unsatisfactory. The unsatisfactory mark for behaviour was given by decision of the faculty council. Expulsion cases were rare, and required the consent of the district (city) Department of Education. In 1970, a new behaviour assessment system was introduced: exemplary, satisfactory and unsatisfactory (again, the latter given by the decision of the faculty council). Exemplary marks for behaviour were given to students who were active in school and community life: in youth organisations, student councils or in their own class. In 1985, marks for diligence were introduced: exemplary, good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory. In addition, schools had their own internal behavioural regulations, drafted and adopted by individual schools. Many schools invited students, represented by their student councils, to participate in the drafting process.

Article 30 of the Basic and Upper Secondary School Law stipulates that students are obliged to observe the school house rules. The house rules are adopted by the school administration and approved by the Board of Trustees. These rules define the code of behaviour for students. Students' rights and obligations, however, should be outlined in the school statutes. For municipal schools, these statutes are authorised by the executive body of the local government. General principles for recognition and punishment of students are outlined by the Ministry of Culture and Education and specified in the school statutes.

Schools are responsible for drafting their own rules of behaviour, which, in turn, should be approved by the faculty council and the district (city) Department of Education.

Student behaviour in and outside school premises

There are children whose behaviour is excellent and others who are easily susceptible to negative influences. Juvenile crime is on the rise, including thefts, illegal trading, alcohol and drug abuse, and prostitution. These crimes bear evidence to the general decline of moral and ethical values. In response to this tendency, on the one hand, the youth police is called to counteract it, punishment terms have become more severe, and the age limit for criminal liability has been changed. On the other hand, popular educational ideas have been revived, and efforts are under way to create the necessary preconditions allowing popular education to direct adolescent behavioural patterns in a positive way.

Cultural and extracurricular activities

Estonian schools have maintained strong folk traditions: choirs, folk dance groups, and orchestras. Their courses are prepared by the song and dance festival committees. These groups recently participated in the All-Estonian Song and Dance Festival that occurred in July 1994. Several schools have drama groups that work under the guidance of theatre performers. All schools organise sports activities. Although leisure activities depend largely on the efficiency of teachers/instructors, students themselves also set up clubs, societies and guilds.

Teacher-student and peer relations

In a coercion-dominated society, relations between teachers and students degenerated, and the relationship was predominately a stressful one. Some studies (H.-I. Pedajas, R. Uring) indicated that both teachers and students felt no joy at school and were prone to anxiety.

A 1993 survey (S. Kera) showed that peer relations at the secondary school level were normal and better than the teacher-student relationship. Secondary school students desired more openness in their formal relationship with their teachers and more opportunities for self-expression. Informal relations evolved between teachers and students if the former treated their students as equal partners in communication. The teacher-student relationship has also been affected by new forms of instruction. In the 1970s, teachers started to experiment with teamwork and individualised education, methods still widely used. However, the problem-solving approach that would foster the development of free self-expression skills in Estonian students has not been adopted.

Absenteeism and truancy

Absenteeism from school was under strict control: students had to present an explanatory note signed by a parent if they missed school. School house rules regulated these matters. Students could be reprimanded for missing school without a plausible excuse, and upper secondary school students could even be expelled. Children of basic school age could not be expelled from school. However, their parents could be subjected to administrative penalties. Article 153 of the Administrative Law allows schools to inflict a fine equal to fifty days' salary to parents who neglect their obligation to raise and educate their children.

Work and money-earning opportunities

When the importance of student labour became clear, organised summer work during the holidays gained popularity. If they were 15-years-old, secondary school students could join the Estonian Students Summer Brigade and work on collective farms. It was contractual work and very popular among older students. Younger students worked part-time at work and leisure camps. Another way to earn pocket-money was to find a summer job on a collective farm.

According to Article 2 of the Estonian Employment Contract Law, people younger than 15 years of age are allowed to work only in exceptional cases. Minors between the ages of 13 and 15 can be employed only upon a written consent of a parent or guardian and a labour inspector of the employer's district, and only for jobs stated in the government-approved list, if work in these jobs presents no danger to their health and morality, does not contravene with their education, and is not forbidden to minors by the collective agreement. Minors are entitled to shorter working hours and longer holidays. The law does not forbid students to work during the school term, but their

work should not interfere with their schooling. Parents or guardians are obliged to comply with this law

In rural areas, students often work on farms together with their parents. In cities it is more difficult for students to find work because the reorganisation of the economy has given rise to adult unemployment, leaving no room for student employment, either.

7. The curriculum

Model timetable for secondary schools

Table 3: Timetable for general education secondary schools (1993/94)[1]

Subject	Grade											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Mother tongue	6	8	5	5	4	3	2/3	2	2	2	2	1
Literature					2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3
Foreign Lang. A			4	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	2
Foreign Lang. B						4	4	3	3	3	2	2
Mathematics	3	4	5	5	5	5	5/4	5	5	3	2	2
Regional studies	2	2	2	2	2							
Geography						2	2	2	2/1	1		
Biology						2	2	2	1/2	1	2	
Chemistry								2	3	2	1	
Physics, astronomy								2	2	2	2	2
History				2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	
Civics									1			2
Human development							1			1	1	1
Music	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Art	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Handicraft	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2			
Physical educ.	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	3
Elective										8	8	7
Mandatory load	20	23	25	25	28	29	29	31	32	32	32	32
Optional						2	2	2	3	4	4	4

1. Number of hours per week.

The weekly lesson load in this study plan represents the maximum load for a student. Optional subjects are compulsory in the above-described volume and the respective credits are marked on the report cards. Free subject courses are voluntary and they are shown on the report cards if a student has taken the corresponding pass/fail examination. It is possible to form integrated study groups for optional and free subject courses for students from parallel grades.

See Table 4 for a timetable for mathematics/physics intensive classes, and Table 5 for a hearing-impaired school timetable.

Table 4: Class timetable (mathematics/physics intensive) (1993/94)[1]

Subject	Grade		
	10	11	12
Mother tongue	2	2	1
Foreign lang. A	3	2	2
Foreign lang. B	3	2	2
Computer studies	1	1	-
Geography	1	-	-
Biology	-	1	2
Economics	-	(2)	-
Chemistry	2	2	2
Astronomy	-	-	1
Literature	2	3	3
History	2	3	3
Human development	1	1	1
Civics	-	-	2
Music	1	1	1
Technical drawing	1	1	1
Physical education	2	2	2
Mathematics	5	5	5
Physics	5	5	5
Mandatory load	35	35	35
Optional	2	2	2
Teaching practical	10	10	-

1. Number of hours per week

Table 5: Timetable – hearing-impaired school (1993/94)[1]

Subject	Grade											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Mother tongue	8	9	10	10	12	12	12	12	12	6	6	6
Literature	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4	4
Foreign lang. A	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Foreign lang. B	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Mathematics	3	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4
Regional studies, nature study and biology	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Chemistry	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	1	-
Physics, astronomy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	2
History, civics and human development	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	2	3	4	4
Geography	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	2	2	2	2
Music, art	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-
Manual art	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Technical drawing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Physical education	-	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Rhythmics	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Practical instruction	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total	20	22	23	24	25	25	29	29	30	33	33	32
Pronunciation and hearing	2	2	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sign language	2	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Optional	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Average mandatory	24	25	27	27	26	26	30	30	3.	34	34	33
Work practice (days per year)	-	-	-	-	-	5	5	5	5	10	10	-

1. Number of hours per week.

School hours

A school week consists of five school days. The curriculum determines the weekly lesson load for students at different levels. The maximum allowed load varies from 20 weekly hours with 4 lessons per day in grade 1 to 35 hours in grades 10 to 12 with 7 lesson hours per day.

The school year consists of 35 school weeks or 175 school days.

The national or core curriculum and its content

Ideology played an important role in the development of the education curriculum in previous years. The curricula often did not correspond to the age group of students and were inappropriate to their level. Some textbooks were translations from Russian.

The responsibility to develop the new curriculum guidelines for basic and upper secondary school rests with the State School Board. A draft version is being prepared for public discussion during the autumn of 1994. In 1995, experimental implementation will follow. Introduction of the new curriculum will probably begin in 1996/97.

The status of the core curriculum has not yet been finalised. Discussions in favour and against a mandatory core curriculum continue. By law, schools must follow the "educational standard", but the interpretation of this term is not quite clear.

Recent reforms and innovations

The first innovations in the development of Estonia's new education curriculum, in reference to its contents and structure, occurred in 1987. Due to political and ideological changes, courses had to be renewed. The entire set of textbooks had to be replaced. By 1994, the following new subjects were introduced: Estonian history, human development studies (health studies, grades 7 and 10, psychology in grade 11, family studies in grade 12) and civics in grades 9 and 12.

The educational content became more diversified thanks to elective and optional subjects. If a school has the necessary teaching capacity and educational material, it can introduce economic studies in grade 11 for two periods weekly. In grades 1-6, religious instruction is possible once a week on a voluntary basis. In grades 7-12, religious instruction can be provided in place of elective or optional subjects. The elective subjects are classified as follows: language and literature (essay theory, foreign literature, etc.), history (history of culture and theatre, regional studies, archaeology, ethnography, etc.), art

(aesthetics, design, calligraphy, textile print, flower arrangement, etc.), religion, social sciences (communication skills, logic, ethics, political science, etc.), science and technology (astronomy, ecology, photography, practical mechanics, domestic chemistry, etc.), nature conservation, public administration, business, land and forest management, domestic science (cooking, sewing, weaving, house repairs, etc.), physical education (self-defence, ballroom dancing, hiking, etc.), health care (hygiene), mass media (journalism, library science, TV, radio, etc.), and pedagogy. Interdisciplinary ties depend on the grade and the subject. Certain topics permeate all subject matters and levels, for example, health and environment. Coherent subject areas facilitate integration between various disciplines.

The problem-solving approach as a method of instruction should be more widely used in Estonian schools together with role plays and discussions.

Adaptation and renewal of the curricula (external and internal instruments)

The external instrument for the adaptation and renewal of curricula is the framework curriculum, which has to be approved by the government. This stage is preceded by the curriculum development process, which involves the participation of many educationalists and researchers. The framework curriculum is then adapted to the conditions and circumstances of each school and the acquired educational standard of the student body. Changes take effect in schools, primarily through subject teachers. The development of elective and optional subjects facilitates the shaping of a school's image and educational profile. All efforts are aimed at the renewal of the curriculum and its on-site adaptation to local conditions and schools.

Decentralisation of education means the delegation of decision-making powers and broader responsibility to local representatives, and encouraging teachers to contribute to the school improvement process.

Policy trends in curriculum reform with regard to greater school autonomy

One of the most significant administrative changes has resulted in greater autonomy of educational institutions. Schools now have greater responsibility in designing their own courses and programmes. The state authorities determine 70%, whilst 30% of secondary school syllabuses remain for schools to design. Schools develop their own curricula for elective and optional subjects, schemes and criteria, instructional policies and delivery procedures. In this way, schools work from their individual educational objectives. The school curricula have to be endorsed by the principal, and approved by the faculty and the board of trustees; in the case of public schools, by the school council. At present, Estonian schools continue to apply the curricula that

were designed by the ministry to a maximum of 95% because not all the prerequisites exist to guarantee the schools' right to the optimum use of their 30% share.

Nevertheless, greater autonomy has encouraged schools to seek contact with their counterparts abroad and has enabled them to improve their curricula with new projects, especially in vocational training and foreign language teaching. Students from other countries have studied at Estonian schools for a short period of time and Estonian students have had opportunities to attend foreign schools.

8. Evaluation and assessment

Student assessment

Admission criteria to secondary education

Assessment should measure the difference between the goals of a course and the results as reflected in students' achievement. In order to assess students' advancements, it is necessary to have standards for the evaluation of these results

All teachers apply their own specific assessment criteria to their students. Whether these are objective enough is debatable, but obviously the evaluation of students' knowledge throughout the schooling process has always been regarded as essential. In the past, teachers were required to assess their students periodically and the frequency of evaluation was strictly checked.

The main criteria for admission to a secondary school is the basic school graduation diploma. However, some secondary education institutions have enforced additional requirements to basic school-leavers; for example, sufficiently good credits on basic school certificates, entrance exams and tests; interviews; questionnaires; ranking within the class, etc.

Examinations and certification

Until 1971, students were simply transferred from grade to grade (grades 4-11) and finished school on the basis of examination results. Since 1971, the number of examinations administered has been decreasing. All examinations were prescribed by the Ministry of Culture and Education.

After 1982, there were four final examinations in grade 8, three of them prescribed by the Ministry of Culture and Education, and one chosen by the school faculty; five graduation examinations in secondary school were also prescribed by the ministry, and the sixth exam was decided by the faculty.

Examinations were administered and the examination results graded on the basis of national assessment criteria determined by examination boards.

Since 1985, conditional promotion to the next grade has been possible for students who had earned unsatisfactory credits in less than three subjects. Under the present system, transition examinations are held after grades 7-8 and 10-11: no more than two examinations, one determined by the faculty, another chosen by the students from among the basic subjects. At the end of grade 9 there are three final examinations: one in the mother tongue, the second prescribed by the faculty, the third elected by the students from among a list. Most of the examinations to be taken by secondary school graduates are determined by the State School Board, the remainder by the faculty council and by the students themselves, who may choose from certain allocated subjects.

Students are allowed to sit for transition examinations if their achievement score in mandatory subjects for the particular grade level is at least satisfactory. After passing the exam, students receive a cumulative mark for the subject. The same principle applies in basic schools; students should have at least a "satisfactory" mark in mandatory subjects and for behaviour.

In vocational schools, professional qualifications are granted by the State Accreditation Committee, which is composed of members nominated by the minister. The committee consists of school and employers' representatives.

The content of examinations is predetermined by the approved course programme. Schools are responsible for the organisation of examinations, except for the essay in the mother tongue for the graduating class. The topics for this examination are traditionally dictated over the radio at the instruction of the Ministry of Education. Examination results are assessed by examination boards, consisting of teachers from each school. There is no noteworthy external control over the examination results.

Assessment of student performance and/or cohort studies on the national level

The use of standardised tests on a national level to assess students' performance has not yet been practised. Entrance examinations to higher education institutions give an essentially fair overview of students' current levels of achievement, since most of the secondary school graduates have to meet almost similar entrance requirements in all subject areas. The number of students accepted to higher education institutions, out of the total number of secondary school graduates, was 27,6% in 1989, 26,8% in 1991, and 27,7% in 1993 (28,4% for day schools).

System evaluation

Official evaluation of secondary school programmes

By law, schools must follow an "educational standard", though this phrase is being variously interpreted. In a broader sense, it can be regarded as synonymous with the mandatory (core) curriculum. Programmes within this core are evaluated by the State School Board. Textbooks distributed free to students must be approved by the board. In the ongoing process of curriculum reform, evaluation criteria have not yet been officially determined.

Evaluation of schools

Evaluation of schools is still conducted by regional authorities (currently, these regional representatives of the government) in the form of school inspections. The State School Board is currently drafting the criteria for school evaluation and reviewing the inspection/evaluation procedure.

The inspectorate

A resolution of the Soviet Ministry of Education in 1972 created a school inspectorate, composed of the inspectors of regional and republican departments of education. Its task was to monitor how educational institutions fulfilled party and government resolutions, decrees and directives by the Republican Minister of Education.

At present, state supervision of educational institutions falls within the realm of the State School Board and structural units of regional educational administrations (inspectors). Their task is to evaluate the efficiency of educational work and administration, and to verify schools' compliance with statutory acts on education.

As a supervisory body, the State Board of Education analyses and appraises the situation in the national and regional organisation and administration of education; and inspects and evaluates the educational activities of public schools, their administration, and financial performance once every three years. At least every second year, regional supervisory authorities inspect and evaluate educational activities, administration, and the financial performance of municipal and private schools.

Assessment of teachers

Teachers' performance is evaluated:

– by school executives: the subject head teacher visits their lessons and conducts tests. Evaluation is based on the teacher's application of the national

curriculum, the individual subject programme, and requirements established by the school. If a teacher applies for the third category teacher salary increment, his/her qualification shall be verified by the school accreditation committee. Principals evaluate teachers on the basis of the in-service training plan and the school development plan;

– by local authorities: a county (city) inspector performs inspection and regional achievement tests on the basis of the national curriculum and subject programme. If a school applies for the second category salary increment for a teacher, the latter shall be assessed by the county (city) accreditation committee;

– by state authorities: a teacher is subject to evaluation by the state accreditation committee if the county (city) has applied for the first category teacher salary increment.

Assessment of teachers is based on the adopted accreditation statute. This statute defines the requirements for the pedagogic standard and professional skills of educators, and provides guidelines for the assessment of the qualifications of individual educators in accordance with these standards.

Evaluation allows teachers to apply for a better job and proportionate salary, to enhance the prestige of the profession. Evaluation is carried out if an employee or his/her employer submits an application for the upgrading of the salary category. The accreditation committee considers the applicant's educational background, pedagogic training, length of service, practical teaching experience, and job performance. There are five salary categories. Categories five, four and three are granted by schools; category two by county (city) authorities; category one by national authorities. The highest category is awarded to educators who are renowned in the field of education; for example, textbook and educational material authors, developers of work books or reference books, academic degree holders, etc.

Applicants for the first and second categories should present a letter of recommendation from the corresponding professional organisation of teachers. The decision to advance a teacher from one category to the next is vested in the accreditation committee, consisting of seven to ten members. The authorised category is valid for three years. Thereafter, it is possible to apply to the same committee for the extension of the category's validity; otherwise it will automatically fall by one level. Accreditation may also lead to the premature forfeiture of the category.

9. School staff: principals, teachers and other personnel

Role of principals and other executives

Formerly principals were appointed by regional departments of education. Today, principals of municipal schools are chosen through a competitive procedure, and the executive body of the local government signs a five-year employment contract with the chosen candidate. Principals of public schools sign an employment contract with the Ministry of Culture and Education. With the approval of school councils, the ministry is entitled to announce competitions for vacant positions.

A principal's responsibility is to guarantee the effective operation of the school establishment and the observance of standing rules (house rules); and to supervise, together with the board of trustees, the faculty council, and student council, the educational, instructional, economic and financial activities of the school. In public schools, principals are accountable to the nine-member school council appointed by the Ministry of Culture and Education; in municipal schools, to the faculty council and the board of trustees.

In reality, principals are often more concerned with the economic and financial matters of the school than educational affairs. If a principal desires, they need not give lessons. Educational aspects within each school are frequently supervised by principals' deputies. The teaching deputy is responsible for the methodological work involving teachers, the supervision of instructional activities, and the development of the study plan and lesson division plan. This person is nominated by the principal and approved by the regional department of education.

A head of extracurricular activities co-ordinates, organises and initiates out-of-class and hobby activities. In vocational schools the principal has a deputy for production matters and a senior vocational trainer.

Teachers

Training of secondary school teachers

At the start of the Soviet occupation, there was a sudden increase in the need for teacher training because many former teachers had been arrested or deported, or fled in advance of the occupation. It became necessary to prepare new teachers in a short time. Four-year courses for teachers were initiated for people with only seven years' education. In 1947, the Tallinn and Tartu courses were reorganised into institutes, and in 1952 the Tallinn Teach-

ers' Institute was upgraded to a higher education institution. At that time, teacher training was based on narrow specialisation, mainly in one subject.

Currently, teachers are prepared and educated in Estonia in the following ways: at universities – Tallinn Pedagogical University and Tartu University; at applied colleges – Tartu Teachers' College (elementary school and music teachers for Estonian-medium schools), Virumaa College (maths-physics teachers for Estonian and Russian basic schools), and Narva College (basic school teachers for Russian-medium schools); and at vocational schools – Tallinn and Rakvere Pedagogical Schools. Pedagogical vocational schools focus on providing practical skills, whereas universities focus on academic achievements.

Tallinn Pedagogical University has the greatest share of teachers trained in Estonia – 37,9%, according to 1984 statistics; 13,2% at Tartu University; 6% at pedagogical vocational (post-secondary) schools (training mainly junior grade teachers); and 30,7% outside Estonia (primarily teachers in Russian schools). Many music teachers are graduates of the Estonian Music Academy.

The qualifications of teachers vary according to the education they have received. Vocational (post-secondary) schools, which admit students after completion of the basic or general secondary school programme, may provide pedagogical vocational or specific post-secondary education. Applied higher education institutions provide an applied higher education, leading to a professional degree. Universities provide higher education, both academic and applied. University education offers integrated study and research courses, fundamental and practical knowledge and is certified by a diploma or an academic degree.

A student's level of education, professional qualifications, vocation or completion of a course at an educational institution are certified by a certificate or a diploma. The formats for these documents are established by the Ministry of Culture and Education.

Student candidates to teacher training institutions are required to pass examinations or tests, depending on the decision of the specific establishment. Admission to vocational schools may be based on basic or secondary school graduation diplomas.

It is possible to regulate the stream of teachers by regulating the enrolment procedures for specialised schools. There are certain subject areas that need more teachers (foreign languages, maths); it is also typical in Estonian schools that female teachers outnumber male teachers. Considering these circumstances, Tallinn Pedagogical University has made concessions to applicants in less popular faculties, such as mathematics, physics and sciences, where stu-

dents are accepted on the basis of one entrance examination. In some specialties a separate arrangement is applied to men.

As a rule, admission to higher education institutions is based on the results of three exams: an examination in the chosen specialty (oral or written); an essay for student candidates to the philology courses (the applicant may present the school graduation essay, which will then be reviewed and reassessed by the examination board); and a professional suitability test for applicants to the pedagogic courses in order to reveal the candidate's motivation, inclinations, professional interests, communication skills, and other desirable qualities. In addition, the average score of a candidate's secondary school diploma is taken into account on an equal basis.

Evolution of teacher training

Teacher training programmes should correspond to the increased standards currently being set for educators. Each of the teacher training institutions is involved in formulating new concepts in teacher training.

Tallinn Pedagogical University, which specialises in teacher education, provides courses in specific majors for subject teachers, general courses (for foreign language, computer studies, and social sciences teachers), courses in minor subjects (for elective courses), and teacher training courses (pedagogy, didactics, learning-teaching psychology, in-service training at schools, etc.).

Most teachers at Russian-medium schools have been prepared at Soviet educational institutions outside Estonia. A few years ago a special programme was initiated for the preparation of teachers for Russian schools in Estonia, but the programme merely arrested the decline in teaching standards. Currently, there is emphasis on training Estonian-language teachers for Russian-medium schools.

In-service training for teachers has been conducted in Estonia since 1922. Current school reform provides for the in-service training of active teachers, which occurs at various locations throughout Estonia. The In-Service Teacher Training Centre co-ordinates refresher training programmes for teachers. The centre facilitates various courses for teachers and school administrators.

Whereas further training for general school teachers and administrators is well organised, vocational school teachers and trainers currently have fewer opportunities for further education in Estonia. As a rule, vocational school teachers have a higher technical, agricultural or other type of education, but no teaching qualifications.

Each year about 12 000 teachers attend courses and seminars arranged by the centre. Formerly, teachers were obliged to upgrade their qualifications once every five years.

At present, the centre is mainly responsible for running short-term courses in specific subjects and methodology at the request of the State School Board. Courses last between two and three days and one week. At the end of each course participants receive a certificate of completion. The centre provides continuing education to pre-school, general and vocational school teachers as well as to school administrators and educational regulators. In addition, it administers an English language centre and a progressive education centre. Altogether, about 8 500 educators participated in 280 courses in 1993.

In 1992, the Adult Education Centre "Teave" was opened for vocational school teachers. The centre and its predecessors are closely connected with the Teachers' Association for Pedagogical Research (UPUI), which was founded in 1972. The centre organises research courses, which have been attended by more than 1 000 teachers. The UPUI has about 250 members, 97 of which were active researchers in 1993. The UPUI members have prepared and compiled educational material, including work books and reference books.

Tartu University and Tallinn Pedagogical University also offer refresher courses. The Pedagogical University opened its advanced training faculty in 1980 and started to provide continuing professional education in health studies.

Besides the above-mentioned locations, there are also regional centres that arrange training courses and seminars.

Modes of recruitment and types of assignment

In 1993, there were more than 17 000 teachers in Estonia, which constitutes 2% of the total workforce. The teacher-student ratio was 1:8,8. The maximum class size was 36.

Under the Soviet regime the "compulsory recruitment" procedure assigned jobs to specialists, and a shortage of teachers was not a concern. However, since 1989, graduates have had to find jobs themselves, resulting in a lack of teachers in many districts. There is a general shortage of Estonian-language teachers in Russian schools, and also of foreign-language teachers, who have found better-paying jobs. Many people who have been trained for a teaching career do not seek employment at schools, for reasons related to the low salary, strenuous work and low professional prestige.

Teachers can work either full-time or part-time. Currently, in Estonia, there are a number of teachers whose training during the Soviet era was limited to one subject only, which explains the need for part-time teachers. Part-time teachers deliver mostly elective, comprehensive courses that schools are unable to cover with full-time staff. Now more effort focused on the design of teacher training programmes will prepare teachers for efficient instruction in several subjects. Innovative training schemes will lead to the implementation of the new classification for teachers: class, cycle and subject teachers.

A class teacher teaches all or most subjects in grades 1-6. If the teacher has an additional specialisation, they can also teach certain subjects in grades 7-9. A cycle teacher teaches a sciences, humanities, or an integrated cycle in grades 7-9, and depending on their training may teach another subject in basic school grades, if necessary. A subject teacher teaches one subject in grades 7-12, and, if properly qualified, may be required to teach another subject(s).

Teachers' tasks and responsibilities

All teachers sign an employment contract. To fill a vacant position, principals arrange a competition following the instructions of the school's board of trustees. In order to assess the candidates' suitability for a teaching position, they are evaluated. The criteria and procedure for this evaluation are established by the Ministry of Culture and Education.

Teachers are primarily responsible for the organisation and delivery of instruction. The weekly teaching load is as follows: 24 hours of teaching for primary school teachers; 20-24 hours of teaching in grades 1-9 for basic and secondary school teachers, 18-22 hours of instruction in grades 10-12 for secondary school and higher secondary school teachers; and 720-880 hours per school year for vocational school teachers.

A teacher's total weekly workload is 35 hours, including in-class time and lesson planning. Besides teaching, teachers must spend a certain amount of time preparing students for examinations, maintaining order in classrooms, preparing study aids and educational material for use during lessons, providing remedial teaching to students with special needs, keeping the teaching equipment in good working order, and attending staff and faculty council meetings. Before 1990, teachers had a number of social tasks in the community: a Soviet teacher was expected to be an active member of society outside the school.

Role of department heads, class teachers and subject teachers

The department heads in Estonian schools are known as deputy principals: the deputy principal (teaching) in a basic school is a position that requires a higher pedagogical education and at least five years of teaching experience; the deputy principal (teaching) in secondary and upper secondary schools requires a higher pedagogical education and at least seven years of teaching experience. Deputy principals (teaching) are responsible for a number of important functions within schools, including the organisation of instruction (developing the timetable, control over teachers' preparation of lessons, observance of curricula and syllabuses, etc.), inspection of lessons, recruitment of substitute teachers, supervision of methodological work, promoting a school's healthy image and reputation, etc.

A head of extracurricular activities in primary, basic and secondary schools, and schools for the disabled, is a position that requires a higher pedagogical or cultural education and at least two years of teaching experience or some other type of higher education and at least five years of experience. Heads of extracurricular activities are responsible for out-of-class and hobby activities at school and outside the school premises.

The role of a class teacher who teaches all the subjects is especially important during the first years at school. The stability helps children to integrate into the new environment and to adapt to the association with larger groups of people than a family circle. The class teacher should be an accomplished educator, able to teach different subjects. Compared to subject teachers, class teachers get to know their students better and thus can avoid social conflicts.

The task of subject teachers is to give thorough and comprehensive knowledge to their pupils in one subject. The demand for subject teachers is greatest at senior levels: upper secondary school and the third level of vocational schools. A subject teacher, being a highly qualified pedagogue, is able to choose and apply various projects in their subject course.

Table 6: Teaching staff in 1993

Certified teachers		85,3%
Uncertified teachers		14,7%
With:	higher education	75,7%
	specialised secondary education	17,8%
	general secondary education	6,5%

Table 7: Male-female teacher ratio

	Men	Women
Total	12,6%	87,4%
Primary school	7,3%	92,7%
Basic school	14,7%	85,3%
Upper secondary school	18,3%	81,7%
Vocational school	30,9%	69,1%

Other members of staff – internal and external

The school personnel consists of teachers and other employees. At municipal schools the staff composition is decided by the principal in co-operation with the board of trustees on the basis of the model composition recommended by the Ministry of Culture and Education. At state schools, the ministry model is mandatory.

The rights and responsibilities of staff members are specified in school statutes, internal regulations, job descriptions and contracts that should be in conformity with the Labour Law and other regulatory legal acts.

Other members of staff include:

– a school psychologist who complements the staff and acts as a counsellor. Presently, there are about 100 school psychologists in Estonia who have undergone the special training required. They are also required to have at least two years of teaching experience;

– a supervisor of a boarding school or school dormitory, who is required to have a pedagogical higher or secondary education. Supervisors of vocational school dormitories may have only completed a secondary pedagogical education;

– a hobby circle instructor may be either a full-time teacher or a part-time employee.

All the above-mentioned employees are considered educational personnel. Schools employ the following non-educational personnel:

– an accountant, who is required to have a higher diploma and the necessary qualification for the job;

– an administrator, who is required to have at least a secondary education and is responsible for administrative matters;

– a laboratory assistant, who is required to have at least a secondary education and works as an assistant in study rooms;

– a librarian, who is required to have at least a secondary specialised education and is responsible for advising students in reading assignments;

– auxiliary employees, including a cleaning force, cloakroom keepers, caretakers, guards, etc;

– salaried employees, including chauffeurs, electricians, boiler house operators, cooks, etc.

Salaries and working conditions

The teaching profession has never been lucrative due to the modest income level. A teacher's salary depends on his/her qualifications (education), service record, and seniority. A teacher's salary also depends on the grade level they teach; for basic school teachers, salaries are lower than for teachers at the secondary school level. In rural areas, teachers may enjoy certain fringe benefits, including subsidised housing, electricity and heating.

Since 1993, the five-category salary system has been applied for the remuneration of full-time teachers. As a rule, a teacher's salary increases with the number of service years. Salary also depends on teachers' performance, judged on the basis of criteria determined by accreditation regulations. The lowest category applies to teachers with less than two years of teaching practice and the minimum educational standard (secondary education only); these teachers earn 560 kroons per month. Teachers with a higher education earn 740-1 040 kroons, and senior specialists earn 885-1 490 kroons per month. Teachers in Russian-medium schools who have mastered the language of the country (namely, Estonian) and have participated in advance training courses are entitled to a higher monthly salary than teachers who have done neither.

A teacher's work is regulated by an employment contract. Teachers are periodically evaluated and, depending on the evaluation results, are entitled to a bonus.

10. The European dimension

While Estonian contacts with the east have existed for many years, the transition to a market economy has given impetus to an expansion of contacts between Estonia and other countries, especially in northern and western Europe. In order to upgrade and modernise teaching standards, programmes and educational facilities, training centres have been set up with the help of Finnish colleagues. These centres were supplied with modern equipment and

up-to-date programmes, and their first students were professional instructors-teachers from all over the country. The same kind of co-operation has also been started between Estonia and Germany.

Several projects have been launched, including the following:

– implementation of other countries' programmes in Estonian vocational schools; for example, the training of printers at the Tallinn School of Communications using Danish programmes;

– development of commonly applicable curricula, adaption of textbooks and educational material;

– furnishing of school workshops with necessary equipment with the aid of Germany, Denmark and Sweden;

– teacher-exchange programmes; the exchange has been mostly teachers from other countries coming to Estonia, but there have been requests for Estonian teachers, for example, teachers of handicraft and photography.

– student-exchange programmes; student groups from Estonia have studied for some time in Germany and Finland. Prior to their studies abroad, the students study the particular language of the country in which they will study.

After Estonia regained independence, the general education system was confronted with yet another demand: increasing student interest in foreign languages. Within the framework of the general education programme the following foreign languages are taught: A-languages – English, German and French. In addition to these, schools offer language courses in Finnish, Swedish, Latin, Japanese, Spanish, Italian, Danish, Norwegian, Esperanto and Yiddish.

Although Estonia, being a small nation, has always emphasised the study of foreign languages, there are various new projects under way regarding foreign-language instruction. Today, it is normal in many Estonian schools to have language teachers from other countries: Denmark has sent many English language teachers; English language teachers from the US Peace Corps have been working in various provincial localities since 1992; and the government has signed agreements with Finland, Denmark, Germany and Sweden concerning foreign language teaching projects. It is also common for foreign language teachers from Estonia to go on study visits to other countries. The project "My Home", initiated by the Baltic states in co-operation with other countries, is dedicated to environmental studies and nature conservation. The joint project, "Democracy", carried out by the J. Tõnisson Institute in conjunction with the United States deals with human rights and civic education.

Table 9: Teaching for languages (by type) 1993/94 school year

Foreign language	Standard curriculum							Intensive							Optional						
	Schools	Students			%			Schools	Students			%			Schools	Students			%		
		E+R	E	R	E+R	E	R		E+R	E	R	E+R	E	R		E+R	E	R	E+R	E	R
Estonian	132	58 006		58 006	19.5		58.3	11	1 672	90	1 582	12.1	1.1	28.0	52	2 543	1 704	839	17.4	14.0	34.3
Russian	475	85 812	85 812		28.9	43.6		2	104	104		0.7	1.2		30	1 134	490	644	7.7	4.0	26.3
English	573	105 904	74 705	31 199	35.7	37.9	31.3	16	8 111	4 960	3 151	58.7	60.7	55.8	130	4 598	2 931	667	31.4	32.2	27.2
German	383	38 658	29 673	8 985	13.0	15.0	9.0	13	7 617	7 120	497	18.9	25.9	8.8	92	2 174	1 959	215	14.8	16.0	8.8
French	29	1 659	962	697	0.5	0.4	0.7	5	832	764	68	6.0	9.3	1.2	8	309	230	79	2.1	1.8	3.2
Finnish	57	3 639	3 384	255	1.2	1.7	0.2	1	91	91		0.6	1.1		82	3 027	3 027		20.7	24.8	
Swedish	14	681	681		0.2	0.3									22	763	763		5.2	6.2	
Latin	8	424	424		0.1	0.2									1	26	26		0.1	0.2	
Greek	1	48	48		0.0	0.0															
Spanish																					
Italian	1	648	648		0.2	0.3															
Danish	1	351	351		0.1	0.1									2	27	27		0.1	0.2	
Norwegian	2	69	69		0.0	0.0															
Sign Lang	2	79	79		0.0	0.0															
Japanese								1	32	32		0.2	0.3								
Hebrew	1	349		349	0.1		0.3	1	349		349	2.5		6.1	1	9	9		0.0	0.0	
Braille															1	7	7		0.0	0.0	

Foreign language	Elective							Paid by parents						
	Schools	Students			%			Schools	Students			%		
		E+R	E	R	E+R	E	R		E+R	E	R	E+R	E	R
Estonian	47	2 942	1 672	1 270	15.0	10.9	29.6	4	299		299	20.6		30.0
Russian	31	1 799	1 409	390	9.2	9.2	9.1							
English	108	6 718	4 876	1 842	34.3	31.9	40.0	12	876	272	604	69.7	69.2	69.9
German	95	4 782	4 198	584	24.4	27.4	13.6	2	24	24		1.9	6.1	
French	14	521	333	188	2.6	2.1	4.3							
Finnish	38	1 665	1 658	7	8.5	10.8	0.1	1	97	97		7.7	24.6	
Swedish	11	448	448		2.2	2.9								
Latin	9	498	498		2.5	3.2								
Greek	2	106	106		0.5	0.6								
Spanish	1	16	16		0.0	0.1								
Italian														
Danish	1	51	51		0.2	0.3								
Norwegian	1	9	9		0.0	0.0								
Sign Lang														
Japanese														
Hebrew														
Braille														

E = Estonian language of instruction R = Russian language of instruction

Table 10: Foreign languages in general education schools (1992/93)[1]

Foreign language	Number of schools	Students		Share (%)	
		Estonian	Russian	Estonian	Russian
Estonian language in Russian schools	124	-	54 830	-	60,1
Russian	518	97 227	-	54,3	-
English	502	56 270	27 329	31,4	29,5
German	376	23 578	8 684	13,1	9,5
French	10	973	186	0,5	0,2
Finnish	14	479	103	0,2	0,1
Swedish	2	205	-	0,1	-
Spanish	1	65	-	0,1	-
Intensive					
Estonian	18	-	1 858	-	45,9
Russian	2	86	-	1,1	-
English	41	6 123	1 865	78,6	46,0
German	21	1 222	78	15,7	1,9
French	3	203	227	2,6	5,6
Finnish	2	146	18	1,3	0,4
Optional					
Estonian	12	-	954	-	44,7
Russian	14	519	-	4,4	-
English	135	4 628	834	39,4	39,1
German	73	1 617	224	13,8	10,5
French	10	133	86	1,1	0,4
Finnish	84	3 903	34	33,3	1,5
Swedish	10	858	-	7,3	-
Latin	1	9	-	0,1	-
Esperanto	1	17	-	0,1	-
Spanish	1	18	-	0,1	-
Danish	1	17	-	0,1	-

1. Schools for disabled children are not included.

Foreign language	Number of schools	Students		Share (%)	
		Estonian	Russian	Estonian	Russian
Elective					
Estonian	13	-	1 226	-	39,4
Russian	18	1 260	-	11,3	-
English	93	3 617	861	32,5	27,6
German	70	2 573	535	23,1	17,2
French	12	329	91	2,9	2,9
Finnish	49	2 362	65	21,2	2,0
Swedish	9	646	20	5,8	0,6
Latin	4	269	-	2,4	-
Yiddish	1	-	313	-	10,0
Italian	2	41	-	0,3	-
Norwegian	1	31	-	0,2	-
At parental expense					
Estonian	7	-	706	-	57,1
English	25	534	573	66,5	41,1
German	2	27	-	3,3	-
French	1	-	24	-	0,7
Finnish	5	220	-	27,4	-
Swedish	1	22	-	2,7	-

Table 11: Choice of foreign languages – grade 3 (1993/94)[1]

Languages	Total (%)	Estonian (%)	Russian (%)
Estonian	31,5	-	87,9
Russian	5,9	9,3	-
English	48,4	69,3	10,9
German	13,2	20,2	0,6
French	0,4	0,6	-
Finnish	0,1	0,2	-
Italian	0,3	0,4	-
Danish	0,1	0,1	-
Hebrew	0,2	-	0,6

1. Does not include classes and schools for the disabled.

Many schools have direct contacts with schools abroad, involving the exchange of students and teachers. Some schools can implement their curricula only with the participation of foreign teachers in the actual teaching process; for example, the Swedish Gymnasium and Jewish Gymnasium in Estonia. Lastly, Estonia has opened, and supports Estonian-medium schools, in other countries, for example, Estonian schools in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Riga.

III. Efficiency and performance

Table 12: Enrolments in various types of secondary schools

	1970	1975	1980	1985	1991/92	1992/93
Secondary (grades 10-12)						
Daytime	21 964	27 942	28 428	28 400	26 318	27 140
Evening	13 181	20 141	17 677	10 831	6 710	6 227
Total	35 145	48 083	46 105	39 231	33 038	33 367
Vocational sec.	1 619	5 925	9 646	14 722	.	.
Secondary specialised						
Daytime	14 270	15 924	15 354	14 927	.	.
Evening	1 905	1 509	1 633	928	.	.
Distance	7 904	7 393	6 913	6 338	.	.
Total	24 079	24 826	23 900	22 193	.	.
Vocational training institutions						
Vocational schools and secondary specialised	.	.	.	.	35 490	30 687
Higher education institutions						
Full-time	12 215	13 948	15 871	14 145	17 929	17 563
Evening	2 621	2 592	2 287	1 795	1 223	1 205
Distance	7 242	6 828	7 314	7 576	6 653	5 696
Total	22 078	23 368	25 472	23 516	25 805	24 464

Table 13: Admissions and graduations

Number of students	1970	1975	1980	1985	1991/92	1992/93
Admitted to						
Specialised	6 436	7 187	6 949	6 991	-	-
Vocational	-	-	-	-	-	11 663
Higher education institutions	4 911	5 260	5 288	5 117	4 612	4 643
Graduated from						
Secondary school	8 938	12 848	15 003	13 100	9 071	9 803
Specialised	4 753	5 523	5 839	5 415	-	-
Vocational secondary	113	890	2 496	3 268	4 294	-
Higher education institutions	2 888	3 076	3 655	3 575	3 000	2 988

Repeater and drop-out rates

During the Soviet period, academic achievement scores were high because teachers worked under pressure from the state to disguise the true advancement level of their students, and only some educators refused to do this.

In the 1991/92 school year, 7 309 students from general educational institutions, namely, 3,5% of all students, had to repeat a course (1 941 girls and 5 368 boys). The greatest number of repeaters was in grades 5-9, (4 858 students – 4,7%); among grade 9 students, 3,5% of students (692 students). In grades 1-4, repeaters constituted 2,6% of students (680 girls and 1 482 boys), 592 of them or 2,8% (187 girls and 405 boys) had to repeat the first year course. The repeater rates were much lower among secondary school students: 1,1% or 289 students from grades 10-12 (136 girls and 151 boys).

At the end of the same school year the repeater rate for evening schools was 12,5% and the academic proficiency level close to 60%. At higher education institutions the drop-out rate was 8,4% or 2 180 students.

In the past, students were seldom expelled from school. In the 1991/92 school year, 413 students were expelled from general schools and 24 from specialised schools. In the same year, 999 students from general schools and 196 from special schools went to work without finishing school.

Admission to higher education institutions

The following statistics show how many secondary school graduates entered higher education institutions: in 1971 – 33,2%, in 1975 – 28,6%, in 1981 – 25,1%, in 1985 – 29,7%, in 1987 – 27,2%, in 1991 – 26,8%.

In 1992/93, 7 228 applicants to higher education institutions sat for the entrance examination, and 4 643 or 64,8% were accepted. Out of this number, 2 722 (69,3% of the applicants) were fresh graduates from secondary school. Of those day school graduates who applied, 79,6% were accepted. Out of 750 candidates to vocational schools, 554 or 73,9% were enrolled.

Employment versus unemployment among secondary school graduates

During the Soviet regime there was no problem with unemployment due to the under-utilisation of human resources. Current specific information about the employment situation in Estonia is unavailable.

IV. Challenges, problems and prospects

The years from 1966 to 1975 signified the transition to the compulsory general education system. One of its negative effects was the decline of educational standards. Secondary schools had to admit boys and girls who lacked interest or ability for intellectual work. Teachers were obliged to carry these students through school at the secondary level.

The curriculum during these years was not balanced. It consisted mainly of fundamental subjects, whereas applied sciences were insufficiently represented. All types of schools generally underestimated the importance of ethics, aesthetics and national science as part of their syllabuses. Education lost its social value. The purpose of some subjects included in the curriculum was often unclear. There were many students in Estonia who were unable to realise their educational aspirations.

Estonian educators are currently focusing on the development and implementation of the new curriculum, teacher training and financial aspects of education.

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It constitutes one part of a series entitled "Guide to secondary education in Europe" developed as part of the project "A secondary education for Europe".
The aim of this series is to make accessible to the public not only a systematic and coherent exposition of the educational systems and traditions in all signatory states to the European Cultural Convention, but also to outline the essential problems these systems are facing at the present time.
Each book has been written by an expert from the country concerned on the basis of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was drawn up by Denis Kallen who has both co-ordinated the series and undertaken the editing of each text in collaboration with the author.
Given that this is an area in which changes take place particularly quickly and that the translation, revision and publication of the manuscript require a certain amount of time, there will be an opportunity to publish updated information for the Final Conference of the project in 1996.

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